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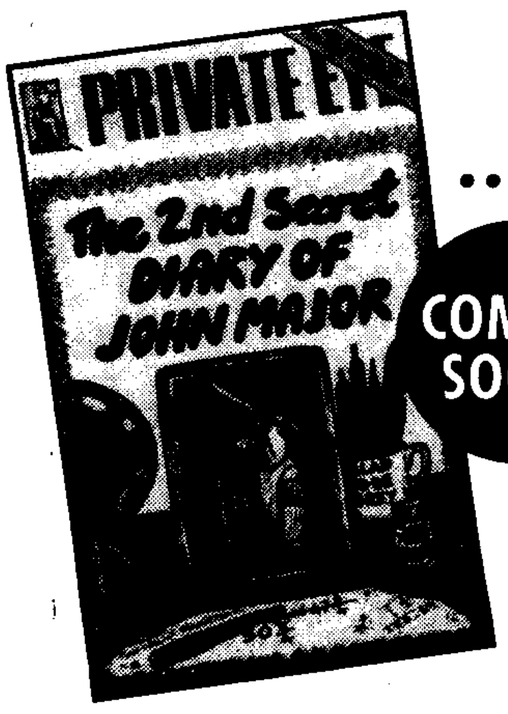

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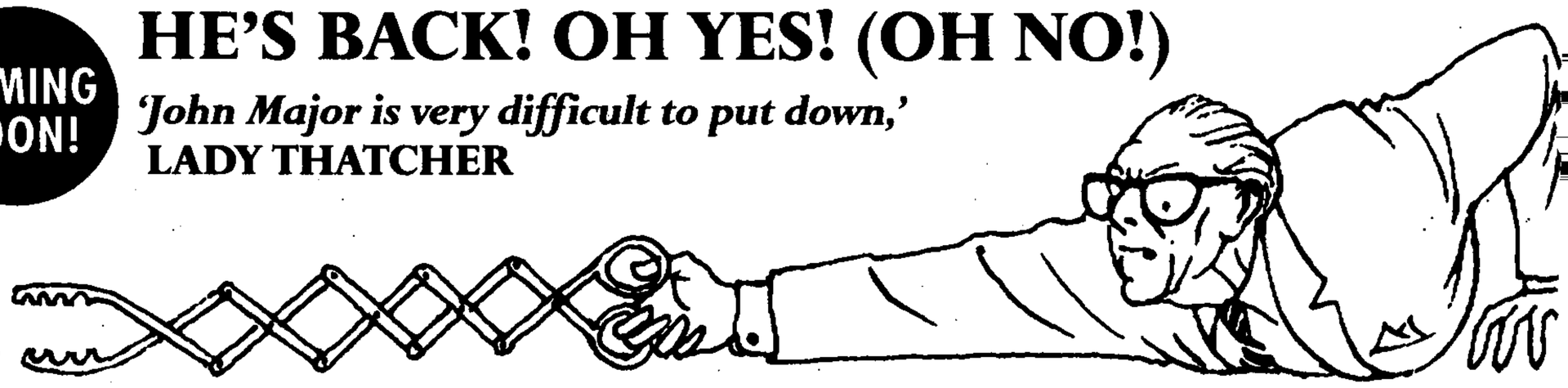

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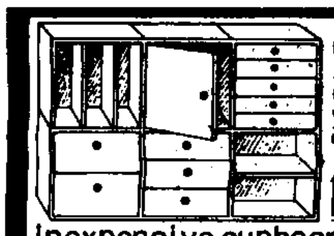

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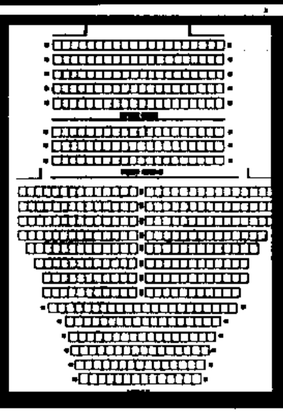

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PRIVATE EYE COLOUR SECTION

MICHAEL HOWARD, the home secretary, has been billed in advance as This Year's Hero of the Tory party conference.

His strategy is to win ovations from the hangers and floggers, without actually proposing hanging or flogging. In this endeavour, he is bound to annoy a few important people, not least Lord Runciman, chairman of the royal commission on criminal justice.

Runciman and his commission, after much anxious discussion, decided not to recommend a wholesale abolition of the right to silence for defendants — but Howard plans to overrule him and give the police and prosecution pretty well everything they want.

His only concession to the royal commission — and to the huge public outcry about the long series of convictions of innocent people — is the "court of last resort", a toothless commission whose inquiries will be conducted by the police (who made most of the mistakes which lead to the injustices) and whose only power is to refer a case to the court of appeal (which made the mistake in the first place).

Otherwise, Howard plans to stick to the view now being peddled by the judiciary: that this "injustice business" has gone on long enough and that the courts and the home office should concentrate on rebuilding confidence in the authorities. Those wrongly convicted, in short, must stay in prison.

By this strategy, new evidence of new injustices will be ignored. Old injustices will be "reexamined". The case which opens this week against West Midlands policemen involved in the prosecution of the Birmingham Six is likely to follow a strikingly similar course to that of the policemen who successfully defended themselves against charges of rigging the evidence against the Guildford Four.

The defence case is likely to be very much the same: that the accused men were guilty after all. The prosecution lawyers in the case are very similar to those who conducted the prosecution case against the six men, and there are (as in the Guildford police case) no plans to call the Six to the witness box. Some of the evidence from intelligence sources is likely to be heard in camera.

This time, however, the Six are ready to intervene if any allegation is made against them. The case is likely to last five weeks and could be fascinating.

THE SCANDAL of how Kuwait ended up with a major share of British Petroleum has been taken a step further by disclosures in the *Financial Times* — but the paper made no mention of the British government minister or his "investment advisers" who masterminded the cock-up.

Norman Lamont, then financial secretary to the treasury, and his advisers, NM Rothschild, appeared side by side on the platform at Lancaster House to launch the privatisation of BP in 1987. Before joining the government Lamont had worked for Rothschild, rising to the rank of director. Purely by coincidence, when someone was wanted to advise the government on the sale, Rothschild it was. (When Norman was sacked from the treasury this year, the merchant bank kindly gave him a job).

The *FT* revealed that no tax was paid to the British exchequer on the profit from the shares because the purchaser, nominally the king of Kuwait, enjoyed "sovereign immunity". Even without the tax avoidance scam, the whole deal was a disaster for BP, which had to buy back the shares at a loss.

It could all have been avoided if Lamont and Rothschild had simply inserted a "golden share" in the sale, stipulating that the British government retained a veto over the future of BP. This point was actually put to Lamont by a hack at the public launch in Lancaster House. He airily brushed the idea aside with a laugh. He (and his expensive advisers) knew better. The public purse paid for their folly — and now they are together again, selling investment advice.

BEHIND every successful man, as the saying goes, is a network of useful contacts and directorships. So the recent criss-crossing of paths of Sir Norman Fowler, chairman of the Conservative party, and Sir Peter Parker, erstwhile Labour luminary, is not perhaps surprising.

Parker, who was chairman of British Rail for seven years, has been seeing a lot Sir Norman, who famously quit cabinet government a while back to spend more time with his directorships [*You mean "with his devoted family". Ed.*]

Nowadays the two men meet at board meetings of the Bardon Group, where Fowler recently became a director (Parker is chairman) with handy options to buy 78,000 shares at a rock-bottom price.

As transport secretary it was Fowler who reappointed Parker as chairman of BR in 1981. Perhaps Sir Norman will soon become a governor of the London School of Economics where Parker is also chairman. Sadly, that post carries no share options.

● *In the City, page 32.*

THE MAN who was press officer for Tory MP Keith Hampson during the 1992 general election is being hunted by West Yorkshire police in connection with the disappearance of £50,000 of NHS money.

John Henderson has not been seen since March when he was sacked in his absence from his job as administrator of Wharfedale general hospital. An internal audit found that £50,000 was missing from the hospital's post-graduate education department.

When acting as Hampson's press officer, Henderson claimed to have previously worked as a hack on the *Daily Mirror*. Police have found no trace of him ever having worked there.

Meanwhile Otley Tories are washing their hands of the missing administrator, describing him as a "mystery man". But that didn't stop them putting Henderson and his wife up as Conservative candidates in local elections two years ago. Who said the NHS was safe in their (slippery) hands?

"Better dead than Red"

IT IS NOW four years since Cecil Parkinson wowed a demoralised Tory party conference with the wonderful news that British Rail was to be privatised.

No more than a faint cheer, however, is expected for the luckless transport secretary John MacGregor, who knows he may have to ditch the whole barmy project if he can't swing the Commons against a Lords amendment allowing British Rail to bid for its own assets.

MacGregor basks in the reputation of being a reasonable, gentle man in a cabinet of ambitious thugs and timeservers. Yet he still hands out vital jobs to his chums. He is almost totally under the influence of "Wild" Bob Horton, his old buddy from St Andrew's university.

When MacGregor was education secretary he consulted Horton about key appointments. Horton, an unreconstructed Thatcherite, recommended David Pascall, one of the few BP executives who thought his chairman the most brilliant man in the world. Pascall became chairman of the new national curriculum council, where he bored colleagues and staff with appeals for "old-fashioned values in education". The great tests disaster was blamed entirely on John Patten — and not enough on MacGregor who set it in motion.

Thrown out of education after the Major coup, MacGregor became leader of the House, where he had little chance to exercise patronage. There was more scope when he became secretary of state for transport after the 1992 election.

"Wild" Bob had been eased out as chairman and chief executive of BP, his period of office coinciding with the oil giant's first ever serious financial difficulties. Horton's not altogether humble management style did not commend itself to colleagues. An irreverent spoof interview with Horton was widely circulated among executives, its theme being that the chairman suffered from illusions of grandeur of Napoleonic proportions.

Nevertheless Horton was soon snapped up by MacGregor as deputy chairman of British Rail and chairman of Railtrack, which will lease out the track to any Thatcherite "entrepreneur" mad enough to bid a few bob for it. Horton, however, did not accompany Railtrack's team to the Labour party conference. He is said to be so right wing that he could not humiliate himself with discussions involving People Who Do Not Vote Conservative.

His patron, meanwhile, is sulking. MacGregor always wanted to be chancellor and assumed he would be first choice when Lamont resigned. He was incredulous when Fatty Clarke was preferred, and has been heard to say that if Major thinks his transport secretary is going to go on forever doing dirty work he doesn't approve of without getting promotion, he's got another think coming.

DAVID HUNT, secretary of state for unemployment and the new darling of the Majorites, is unlikely to have a happy time at conference either.

He may take refuge from the unemployment figures by singing the praises of the government's policy on training. But before he does so, he should consult Sir Donald Walters, whom Hunt will remember from his long stint as secretary of state for Wales.

Walters had a rotten afternoon at the Park Hotel, Cardiff, on 17 September when he chaired a meeting of creditors of his training company, Commercial and Industrial Training Services. The company was in receivership, owing some £600,000, including a rather nasty £99,000 in PAYE and national insurance contributions which never found their way to the exchequer.

The firm was set up as a glittering showpiece of what can happen when you mix government intentions and private enterprise money. It went from disaster to disaster. But the real reason for the collapse was the meanness of the government with the training funds it had promised.

All this was awful for Sir Donald, whose chief characteristic in public life has been his unswerving support for the Tory party. He was chairman of the Welsh Conservative party from 1977 to 1982, and was promptly knighted by his heroine, Margaret Thatcher. For most of the 1980s he sat on the Welsh Development Agency which had just about as much success promoting the partnership between government and private enterprise as had Sir Donald's bust company.

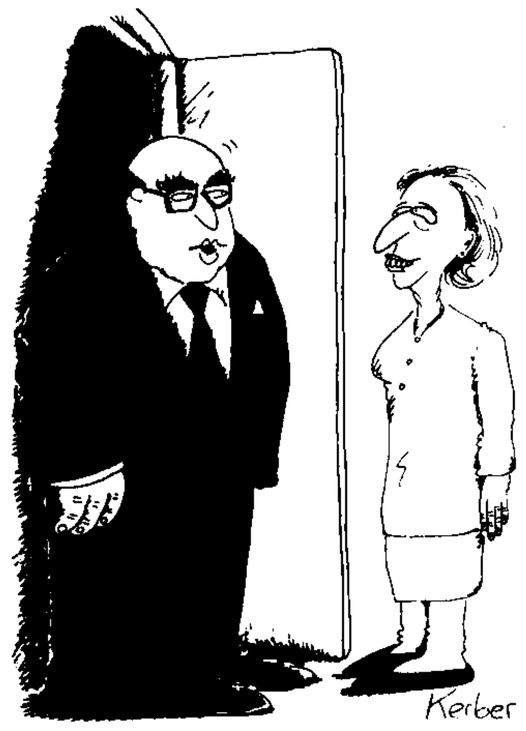
THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to push ahead with VAT on fuel bills should sink the Scottish Tories at next year's Euro-elections.

North of the border, and in Ulster too, nights are longer (even before the likely move to ditch GMT and fall into line with Central European Time) and, of course, much colder. The government's pledge to increase benefits and allowances to protect those least able to pay has therefore failed to convince a sceptical Celtic electorate.

Throughout the UK as a whole, though, two groups are being excluded from any help whatsoever. Back in 1988 the government broke the link between unemployment benefit and allowances paid to those on training schemes such as YTP.

The rates for trainees have remained frozen at a staggeringly generous £29.50 a week for 16 year olds and a massive £35 a week for those aged 17 years-plus. Because those receiving training — in how to stack a supermarket shelf or operate a cash register for 40 hours a week — are not regarded as available for work (and not included in the unemployment statistics) they will be excluded from the benefit upgrading promised by Kenneth Clarke to coincide with the imposition of VAT.

Student grants have also been frozen to encourage business for the state moneylenders at the Student Loan Company. No upgrading there either, natch — but how many private landlords and college residences will volunteer to absorb the tax hike?



"Hi, honey, I'm Omov!"

SPECULATION in the *Eye* about the likelihood of John Smith restoring the right of constituency Labour parties to choose parliamentary candidates has, not surprisingly, been confounded by events.

Whatever the implications of the one member, one vote decision at Brighton (where, incidentally, the local party has been suspended for many months), north-west regional organiser Eileen Murfin has backed a purge in New Brighton, Wallasey, where six members have been suspended "pending investigations".

They include Lol Duffy, who had to "make way" for Angela Eagle, who became Wallasey's MP; and Paul Davies, who beat Birkenhead MP Frank Field in a reselection contest only to have the vote declared void by Labour head office in Walworth Road.

Eagle and Field are up again for reselection but won't be facing challenges from Duffy and Davies unless their suspensions are lifted. The sitting MPs for Birkenhead and Wallasey are still likely to be sitting on the green leather benches after the next general election.

Another of those suspended is Duffy's partner, Liz Williams, who is accused of "verbally abusing" Frank Field, criticism of whom is just not on. Safe outsiders and maverick right-wingers remain the order of the day in Smith's "modernised" party.

Wallasey CLP, meanwhile, hasn't been able to vote on OMOV because it is also suspended and thus excluded from sending a delegate to conference.

THE Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a shadowy organisation based at Westminster whose main purpose is to organise "outward delegations" for British parliamentarians.

The last couple of years, for example, have witnessed "outward delegations" to Zaire, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Albania.

For some reason, however, the IPU is wary about its work becoming widely scrutinised, and *Out of Order*, a book due out this month from Labour MP Tony Banks and journalist Jo-Ann Goodwin, has been censored by order of the IPU.

In the original manuscript a chapter headed "How to Have a Good Time" contained quotes from the IPU's 1991 annual report. Mysteriously for an organisation dedicated to spreading the message of parliamentary democracy throughout the world, the IPU refused permission to publish the quotes.

THE SCANDAL of "Tories-only" appointments for government jobs continues apace.

Michael Howard, home secretary, has issued instructions throughout the home office that any appointments to quangos should in future be cleared first with the Tory whips' office.

This cannot be constitutional, shurely?

'Backbiter'

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YOUNG CONSERVATIVES SPECIAL

UNDER the leadership of increasingly deranged national chairman Andrew Rosindell, membership of the Young Conservatives has fallen from around 30,000 to a figure officially put at 10,000, but which party officials privately agree is nearer 5,000.

The organisation is run by an uneasy alliance of libertarian free-marketeers and bigoted Thatcherite authoritarians, of whom Rosindell, a nasty buffoon, is chief.

He lives in Essex with his mother and once, when asked whether he had a girlfriend, responded without apparent irony: "No, but I've got a Staffordshire bull terrier." This creature, named Spike, is made to sport a union-jack waistcoat and featured in Rosindell's election literature when he stood for the safe Labour seat of Glasgow Provan at the general election.

A recent meeting of the YCs' national advisory committee, which was to have been held in Wales, was instead held in *Grantham, Lincolnshire*, for tiresomely obvious reasons. At this meeting a number of historic decisions were taken. With Rosindell in the chair, all the major YC chairmen voted in favour of abolishing race relations legislation.

Another pet hate of Rosindell's is homosexual law reform. The former Conservative students' leader Ian Smedley, who has re-emerged as editor of the YC magazine *Campaigner*, had planned to table a motion at the advisory committee meeting calling for the age of consent for homosexuals to be lowered from 21 to 16. Smedley was taken aback by the uproar at his proposed motion. Rosindell demanded that he drop the idea, remarking to one official: "We don't want any poofy nonsense in the YCs".

This hardly comes as a surprise, since Rosindell has frequently talked of spearheading a moral crusade to regenerate the nation's youth, consisting of campaigns against Sunday trading, cannabis, abortion and in favour of re-criminalising homosexual activity.

Most bizarre was his crackpot notion of a joint campaign with fundamentalist Christian groups, thus boosting the YCs' membership with religious extremists. Indeed, so opposed to Sunday trading is Rosindell that he has refused an offer of sponsorship from the Shopping Hours Reform Council for the YC fringe meeting at the party conference in Blackpool. Instead, the meeting will be funded by the politically incorrect British Fur Trade Association.

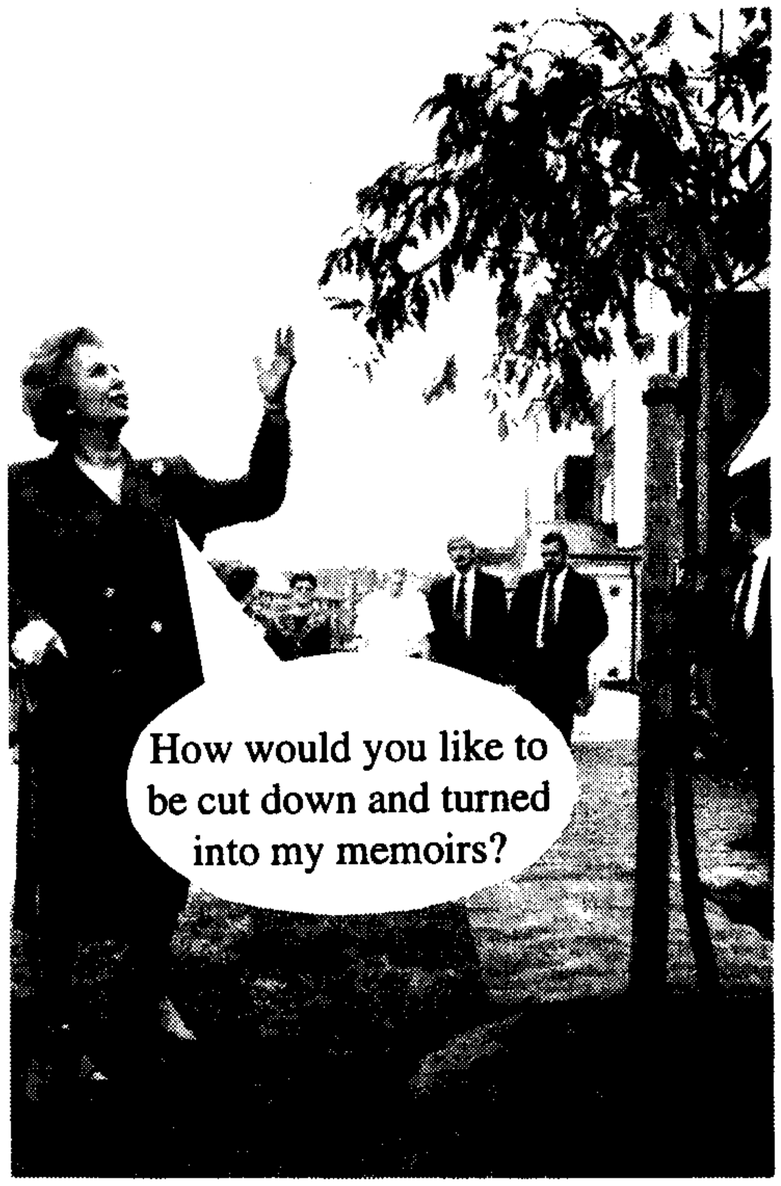
The image of Rosindell as a regenerator of the nation's youth suffered a setback last year when he and a party of cronies were returning from a visit to the hated European parliament in Strasbourg. One of his chums, Terry Hall, was arrested at Dover for being in possession of pornographic magazines, and Rosindell was overcome with embarrassment when police searched his party's coach for other magazines and exotic substances.

Rosindell's favourite to succeed him as national YC chairman is a bearded Nottinghamshire chicken-farmer called Martin Potter. Nicknamed "Trainspotter", because of his fashionable hobby, or "The Nazi", because of his collection of Nazi memorabilia and his tendency while at Nottingham university to march around in a continental manner, Potter disagrees with Rosindell on the key issue of abortion.

While Rosindell is pro-life, Potter is pro-abortion — because "it will kill off the underclass". However, another specimen of pond life has decided to throw his hat into the ring. Adrian "Podge" Lee, a former associate of Harry Phibbs in the since-disbanded Federation of Conservative Students, is willing to take on the financial burden of being national chairman. Since this is an unpaid post and Lee is unemployed (some would say unemployable), it is fortunate that he managed to frighten the *Mail on Sunday* into paying him £5,000 in libel damages over an article following last year's party conference in which Lee was bracketed with even more unsavoury right-wingers. (His solicitor was none other than Simon McIlwain, who was suspended by the Monday Club in March 1984 for trying to mount a right-wing coup, with John Pinniger, to take over the club.)

Rosindell is already planning next year's YC conference in Southport. Suggested guest speakers include Sir Rhodes Boyson, Sir Bernard Ingham, Alan Clark and Patrick Robertson (the Bruges Group person). Rosindell has also suggested inviting loony American moral majority preacher, the Reverend Pat Robertson (no relation) to lead prayers at the opening of the conference.

THATCHER NOT MAD



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE foreign ministries of Britain and France are delighted by another shameful coup in Bosnia.

Somehow the 11 judges elected to the new international war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia do not include a single Muslim. Even a Parsee judge from Pakistan and a Copt from Egypt have been found to avoid the dreaded M word.

However, even though the UN has nominated the judges and chosen the Hague as the tribunal venue, do not expect the trials to start just yet. First, they need a prosecutor, and the British and French on the security council have scuppered the best equipped candidate for that job, Cherif Bassiouni.

His main problem is not that he is a Muslim, but that he was on the commission studying war crimes in the Balkans and so would have been in a position to prosecute quickly. How embarrassing for Lord Death and his masters in Paris and London if the bloodthirsty bandits to whom they are handing over the ethnically cleansed sections of Bosnia were to be arraigned for war crimes!

The paragons of western European civilisation on the security council are looking at less well-prepared candidates — and doing so with no sense of urgency. If they take their time, there may be no victims left to bear witness.

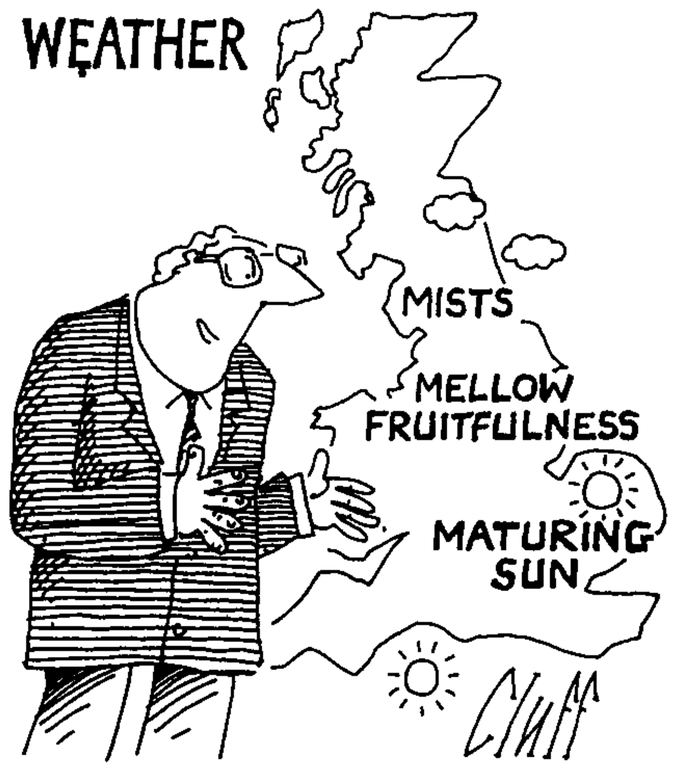
ENTERPRISE

UNHAPPY business folk are causing a stink in Falkirk, in the Scottish lowlands, where the job-creation quango, Forth Valley Enterprise, has been rather too careful in allocating public funds.

Since it was established two years ago, Forth Valley has handed out more than £1.5 million to seven local firms in contracts and grants. By a remarkable coincidence, directors of all seven firms sit on the Forth Valley board! For instance, Forth Valley chairman Robbie Taylor's company, Robert Taylor Holdings, has received more than £30,000 for "business development" and "environmental improvements".

Interestingly, details of transactions made since April 1992 have been hidden away in a special register, whose existence was only revealed on the last page of the board's annual report. Meanwhile, information about deals made prior to April 1992 remain "confidential", much to the chagrin of Falkirk's two Labour MPs, Michael Connarty and Dennis Canavan.

The hundreds of local firms whose directors are *not* on the 11-strong Forth Valley board are rather miffed about the allocation of funds. They have accused Forth Valley of neglecting small businesses struggling under the Majorite yoke, while handing over large sums to multinationals. Indeed, £165,000 has been given to an ICI splinter company, Zeneca, whose David Hyde is a former Forth Valley director. Zeneca has recently been making workers redundant — not quite in keeping with the enterprise agency's brief, which is "to create jobs and boost the local economy".



IN THE COURTS

SCANT mention in last Saturday's *Sun* of Homes Assured chairman Anthony Dobson's appearance at Southwark crown court. Why?

Including the headline, just 56 words reported his five and a half year jail sentence for fraudulent trading at his failed mortgage broking agency. Dobson's deputy, Keith Woodward, received four and a half years for the same offence: little consolation for investors who lost £10.7 million when the company collapsed in 1989.

There was a time, of course, when the *Sun* paid a great deal more attention to Homes Assured, one of whose prestige non-executive directors was the ever hilarious Edward Du Cann. As the *Eye* reported before Dobson and Woodward's arrest, the pair found many of their "targets" courtesy of the *Sun*'s promotions department.

Homes Assured operated a scam which depended upon ensnaring council tenants who were eligible to purchase their houses under the government's right to buy scheme. Dobson and Woodward arranged mortgages for the tenants, but often decided they could find better uses for the money than their luckless clients.

To drum up business, Homes Assured ran a "Win Your Council House" contest in association with the paper, which splashed the draw on its front and centre pages for several days running. Readers were encouraged to fill in simple entry coupons and send them to Fortress Wapping. Thousands swallowed the bait, which proved a tremendous coup for Dobson and Woodward. They were handed the entry coupons by the *Sun* and thus gained a ready made list of prospective victims.

Strangely, none of this was mentioned in the *Sun*'s court report, presumably due to pressure on space.

Street of Shame

NO SOONER had Rupert Murdoch stuffed $349 million into his swag bag having sold his stake in the *South China Morning Post* to Malaysian Chinese businessman Robert Kuok, than the paper's editorial priorities began to look distinctly shaky.

Kuok's purchase is said to have been eased by financial backing from the Chinese mainland — which perhaps explains the paper's curious contents on Saturday 18 September.

The previous day had seen a severe storm named "Becky" hit Hong Kong, killing one man, injuring 130 and leaving 40 missing at sea. As if nothing had happened, the *Post* ran an overwrap the next day with the headline: "Choose Beijing, says HK".

All four pages of the wrap were stuffed with a grovelling series of "articles" and "stories" extolling China's bid for the 2000 Olympic games. The death and destruction caused by Becky was effectively relegated to page two. The editorial column was similarly blind to the storm, dealing solely with Beijing's Olympic aspirations (in favour, natch).

Whatever Kuok's spokesmen on the *SCMP* may say, old China hands can't wait to read the "fair and objective" coverage it gives the next time Hong Kong governor Chris Patten dons gloves for a few rounds with "lefty" Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, on the political future of the colony — or perhaps lack of it.

WHAT are the London hacks up to in the Somali capital, Mogadishu?

The United Nations command there claims privately that a recently captured aide of warlord Farah Aideed was carrying a curious letter from Sam Kiley of the *Times*; Mark Huband of the *Guardian*; Paul Watson of the *Star*; and Scott Peterson of the *Telegraph*.

As a result of the letter, the four are reported to have been denied access to US PX facilities. So what was in the letter?

Written in the best *arslikhan* and dated 14 September, it implores the warlord, whom it refers to as "General", to consolidate his political breakthroughs by giving an interview. "The timing for this now, is *perfect*," the letter says, "...it would allow General Aideed to take the political initiative — he already has the military initiative."

Since the US White House has adopted a sour grapes policy and says it is not going to devote all its time to looking for Aideed (after 400 US rangers had spectacularly only managed to arrest UN staff [*Eye* 828]), the hacks were quite right. But they can hardly expect Aideed's American targets to like them for it.

THE *Daily Telegraph*'s recent leader concerning invasion of privacy and Sir Allan Green, the former director of public prosecutions, took the biscuit for unadulterated humbug.

It set out to slate the paper's rivals for their coverage of how Sir Allan, "a widower trying to rebuild his shattered life", had gone on holiday with a woman; and loftily slammed their "prurient treatment of a story which has its origins in such tragedy and distress".

The story wasn't too tragic — nor the *Telegraph*'s concern for Sir Allan's privacy too great — to stop the leader writer repeating every single one of the gory details others had been condemned for printing.

But such are the double standards at the *Daily* and *Sunday Hellograph* titles, whose editor-in-chief, Max "Hitler" Hastings, is always the first to criticise tabloid rivals (especially Andrew Neill at the *Sunset Times*) for writing about Britain's royals and nobs from anything other than a kneeling position.

THERE WERE embarrassing scenes at a recent *Sunday Torygraph* dinner given by editor Charles Moore at the Beefsteak Club to say farewell to tame lawyer Richard Sykes.

Those present included Torygraph proprietor Conrad Black and his pneumatically-assisted wife Barbara Amiel, as well as various members of staff and ex-editors. The dress requirement of lounge suits was ostentatiously overlooked by louche hack Nick Farrell, who turned up in stained and creased DJ.

Whoever drew up the seating plan was either naive or a joker, since former City editor Ian "PR" Watson was seated next to an old enemy, Frank "Chippy" Johnson. The thirsty Watson was soon referring to Johnson as "a poooof" in his sinister Scottish accent, as in "Hey, poooof! Pass the salt". Watson was evidently confused, however, since he later turned to Johnson, indicated Amiel and inquired: "Well, poooof, have you ever fucked her?"

Battle honours for the occasion, however, went to *Sunday Torygraph* deputy editor John "You're right" Connell. In a bid to impress Black, he launched into a surprising attack on Lord Tebbit, calling him all manner of unpleasant names. The table fell silent. "Interesting you should say that," said Black in a velvet tone of menace. "Norman Tebbit's a good friend of mine, y'know. I recently appointed him to the board of *The Spectator*."

Connell has since been backpedalling desperately. Responding to a story in the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner's Diary about the Earl of Onslow proposing Tebbit for membership of the Beefsteak, Connell was quoted as saying that he would "be supporting Tebbit wholeheartedly. He will be a marvellous member."

PANORAMA'S recent exposé of the allegedly bent Scotland Yard detective John Donald was followed by a fascinating article in the *Daily Mirror* by one Jeff Edwards.

Edwards, who knew all about Donald's hobbies of guitar playing and fishing, reported how the officer had walked into Croydon nick following the programme and given himself up. What the article did not describe was the close relationship that exists between its author and the policeman.

On one of the secret tape recordings made by *Panorama*, Edwards' name crops up as someone Donald says he can trust to check whether or not BBC hacks have him under surveillance.

Oddly, not long after the secret recording was made, the BBC press office received a call asking whether *Panorama* was indeed doing a number on a Scotland Yard undercover cop. The inquiry was from the *Daily Mirror*'s Jeff Edwards.

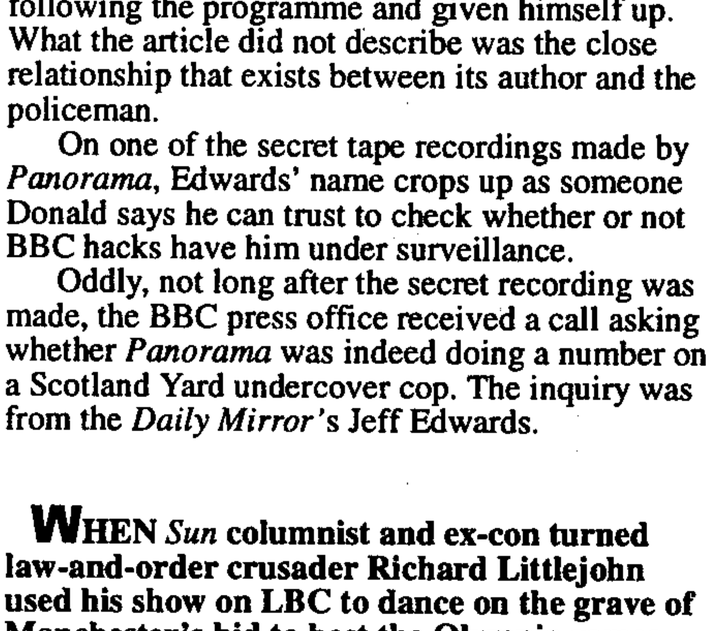
WHEN *Sun* columnist and ex-con turned law-and-order crusader Richard Littlejohn used his show on LBC to dance on the grave of Manchester's bid to host the Olympic games, the *Daily Mirror* was quick to exploit the situation.

In the midst of a scathing run-down of Manchester, Littlejohn had said that the "only thing you can say for Manchester is that it isn't Liverpool".

The *Mirror* reacted by running a news story on the diatribe, quoting various indignant parties. Indeed, the *Mirror* has been hoping that Littlejohn's remarks, as reported in the regional media, will alienate *Sun* readers in both cities, as happened in Liverpool after the *Sun*'s coverage of the Heysel stadium disaster a few years back.

Granada TV pestered Littlejohn for an interview for several days, but the oikish hack refused to play ball. Eventually, a Granada crew caught up with him at the Labour conference in Brighton, when he was on his third pint of Guinness.

What the crew failed to spot, however, was the embarrassed figure who had been enjoying a drink with Littlejohn and had scuttled away, covering his face, as the videotape began to roll. It was none other than the *Daily Mirror*'s associate editor (politics), the oleaginous David Seymour, who had been one of the key movers behind the paper's attack on, er, Littlejohn.



"Do you fancy staying in and waiting for burglars, or going out and getting mugged?"

TWO DAYS before its "relaunch", the *Observer* mounted a beano for the ad world to highlight the many attractions on offer from the new paper

Among the scoops which startled ad agency types had flashed in front of their eyes as typical of what they could expect to find was a story by environment correspondent Geoffrey Lean. Clearly, no one had thought to tell the *Observer*'s marketing types that Lean had in fact left the paper some weeks earlier to join the *Independent on Sunday*.

DAVID "Slug" Sullivan's pouting protégée Karren Brady is beginning to feel the pressure in her implausible new role as boss of Birmingham City football club — or "Bummingham Titty", as it is now popularly known.

Her previous job handling porn telephone adverts for Sullivan's tacky *Daily* and *Sunday Sport* was a doddle compared with life in the mediocre lane of the first division. She was therefore incensed by the *Daily Spurt*'s report of Bummingham Titty's 1-0 defeat by Aston Villa in the first leg of the Coca-Cola cup, which accurately described the game as one-sided and said the scoreline could have been much higher.

"Sport Newspapers owns Birmingham City and Sport Newspapers also pays your salaries," she complained to hacks on the sleazy rag. "You ought to be supporting the team, not criticising it." In the interests of fairness, accuracy and press freedom she is now demanding to see all stories about Birmingham City *before* they are published.

Meanwhile, the *Eye* has received a letter from Steve Millar, sports editor of the *Daily Spurt*, indignantly denying our suggestion that la Brady asked the paper to send her a pin-up photo of Manchester United star Ryan Giggs to put on her wall. "Get your facts straight," he writes. "Birmingham City managing director Karren Brady rang my desk to order a picture of Ryan Giggs *as a favour for a business contact of hers* [our italics]. At no time was production of that day's paper disrupted by the call and at no time was the indication given that it was for her bedroom wall. We might have cornered the market in naked women, but there is nothing big or clever about cornering the market in naked lies."

From a paper which made its name by printing shameless fabrications — World War II Bomber Found on Moon, etc — this is pretty rich. But in any case, the idea that our story was "lies" does not seem to be borne out by a memo which the *Sport*'s managing editor, Tony Livesey, sent staff after reading the last issue of the *Eye*. It runs thus:

"RE: *PRIVATE EYE* — STREET OF SHAME.

"This article, like numerous others in the past, has obviously been generated internally. In no other business in the world would management tolerate such betrayal of confidence and general doing down of our own products.

"Embarrassing members of the Board is not big and is not clever. If I find the person who leaked this information, they will be sacked on the spot.

"The board are only interested in employing loyal staff members. We are running a business here not a poxy college newspaper where anything goes."

Alas for Livesey, it seems that the *Sport*'s wretched galley-slaves are none too upset at the thought of being released from their chains. As soon as the memo appeared, no fewer than three copies were promptly leaked to the *Eye*!

Grovel

WHILE wishing to join in the general good wishes to Sir Peregrine Worsthorne upon publication of his mem*oirs, I am struck by the blatant hypocrisy* of one of his recent *Sunday Torygraph* columns.

Commenting on the appointment of David Mellor to the board of English National Opera by Lord Harewood, Worsthorne waxed indignant. He pointed out that like Mellor, Lord Harewood is "pretty seedy himself" and explained that his mother's butler, James, had watched Harewood arrive at "the entrance to the house of the woman — now his second wife — with whom he was brazenly two-timing his exemplary first wife... Yes, Mr Mellor and Lord Harewood have a lot in common."

Of course Worsthorne the toad omitted to inform his readers that he, too, has a lot in common with Mellor and Harewood, since for several years he brazenly two-timed his first wife Claudie with the actress Moira Fraser.

TO THE infamous Groucho Club, where I sight bibulous novelist and Rudyard Kipling-lookalike, Peter Ackroyd.

Modern Review editor Toby Young, who has been working out at a gym and has acquired a modest degree of upper body definition, decides to expose his pectorals to catch Ackroyd's attention.

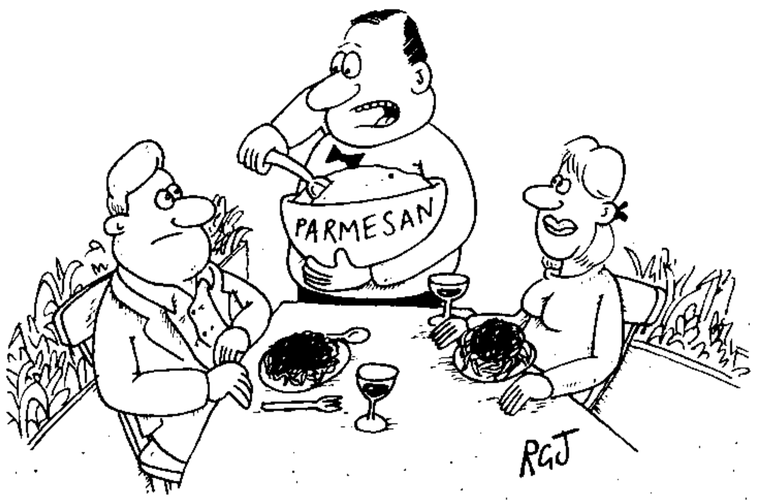
The novelist explains that one of the pleasures to have come his way by virtue of huge advances from the likes of Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson is ownership of a gym in Barnstaple, which includes a bodyguard school.

"Surely, you don't need a bodyguard?" inquires Young.

"Oh, but they're very useful, dear boy," replies Ackroyd. "They accompany me to drinks parties and make sure I don't misbehave, then they take me home and put me to bed."

Soon Ackroyd joins our table — though in a somewhat unconventional manner. He attempts to perch on the arm of a sofa, but falls backwards instead, his head coming to rest in the cushioned crotch of twentysomething freelance hack Sean Langan.

There being no bodyguards to hand, efforts to raise his portly form from its comfortable resting place are prolonged and a strain on all concerned.



"...and would you like your meal to smell of vomit?"

● *I AM PRAYING that the publicity campaign for Lady Thatcher's memoirs passes without incident, and that the Iron Lady (retd) will refrain from provoking the same scenes that marred her appearance at the American Book Association conference in Miami earlier this year.*

At the authors' breakfast, she was was supposed to speak for 15 minutes, but instead harangued delegates for more than half an hour.

Presumably overtired, she said she'd heard far too much talk of consensus when what people really wanted was firm leadership. When she then began to extol the benefits of SDI, the totally discredited "Star Wars" programme of her beloved chum Ronald Reagan, one of the podium guests walked out, to be followed by an estimated 20 per cent of the audience.

WHAT is happening at my favourite London art dealer, Agnews?

It seems that Lady Dawson, an elderly lady living in Switzerland, was surprised last year to read in a Christie's catalogue that a painting, *Entry to the Circus* by John Armstrong, which belonged to her family and which she thought was in safe storage in Agnews vaults, had been sold for £43,000.

Further inquiries revealed that three other Armstrongs had been sold without her knowledge. There followed a rather nasty row between Lady Dawson and her daughter, which led, I gather, to a ferocious battle between Agnew executives and a rather crucial resignation.

My old chum Julian Agnew, the chairman, says he is still a great fan of the *Eye* but won't comment on "gossip". Oh dear.

WRITING in the *Grauniad*, Ms India Knight complains about the *Sunset Times*'s recent feature on the attractions of "Asian babes" with "*cafe au lait* cleavage" to powerful men. She also takes a swipe at *ST* editor Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, whom she describes as "another big fan of the 'dusky maiden'."

I wonder what India's father makes of this outburst. He is Andrew Knight, Andrew Neill's boss.

I also wonder if la Knight's comments are influenced by the fact that she herself used to be one of Neill's escorts. One evening, back in his flat, "Brillo Pad" was so overcome by the allure of her *cafe au lait* cleavage that he felt the need for urgent relief. "Put your hand on my big thing, babe," he drawled.

● *TALKING of which, I am glad to see that my old friend Princess Koo Stark has found a new partner in life: the awesomely built, 6ft 7ins tall ex-Grenadier Guardsman, Gerald "Bertie" Way.*

A young female friend recalls a dinner party at which Bertie made his desires known to her with the delicate words "I want to lick you all over". Throughout the meal, he made constant reference, accompanied by nods and winks, to the fact that he had very big hands and feet, know what I mean, and urged her to come back to his flat before joining the others at a nightclub.

Having agreed to this, the girl was admiring the theatrical decor when, upon turning round, she was greeted with the sight of Way standing proudly to attention, his trousers around his knees. She took one look, screamed, and ran out into the night.

Bertie himself is fond of telling business chums that while at Eton he was the only boy in living memory to be excused from wearing shorts for games, so as to avoid ... er... exposure. One former girlfriend regales chums with anecdotes including comparisons to a family-size bottle of Fairy Liquid.

Pip Pip!

Pseuds Corner

Step We Gaily
(Lucinda Broadbent 1992)

Filmed at a lesbian and gay ceilidh in Glasgow, this film reveals the unexpected homoeroticism of Scottish country dancing.

"It's Queer Up North", National Lesbian and Gay Festival brochure

"Tree-hugging" was "invented" by Rod Nicholson, a former headmaster who runs the Centre for Harmony in Gloucester, as a way of relieving stress... Mr Nicholson holds special seven-hour tree-healing courses over the weekend. Apparently there's more to hugging a tree than meets the eye — the right breathing technique and posture are essential to connect with its "stillness, strength and centredness".

Independent

"You know," she says, straddling a prop toilet, a headmike strapped over her hooker-from-hell wig, "not so long ago women weren't allowed to wear a skirt above their ankles and here we are douching on stage."

She does this in preparation for her famed Public Cervix Announcement. Having inserted a speculum into her vagina, she invites audience members to step right up and, aided by a torch, look within.

She does it because "the cervix is beautiful and a lot of people never see it" and, ever the educator, "to show men there aren't teeth inside. For me, showing my cervix is like showing my face. It's no big deal."

ANNIE SPRINKLE
Elle

The Homosexual, Or The Difficulty Of Sexpressing Oneself TV Productions

An hysterical farce of sex change and gender identity set on the Russian Steppes in the middle of a snow storm...

"It's Queer Up North"

La vie continues — so does INPUT, with increasing chutzpah. Old, new, self-renovating, self-transforming, ebullient, feisty, frisky, always pristine — and with panache.

Think of it as an heuristic place, a maieutic experience. A marketplace for ideas in the shmatta trade of this cocky television of our times.

Our bash, our ashram, our fiesta is a place for discoveries: about others — what they do, how they do it — discoveries that become a catalyst for discoveries about ourselves.

SERGIO BORELLI
Flyer advertising INPUT (International Public Television) Screening Conference 1994

Settling on a variety of potato to grow can be as intimate and personal an affair as choosing a lover. I played the field for a while and had a serious fling with the pink-tinged Desiree for a couple of years until I found it did not always cook well: beauty is seductive but it is not everything.

MICHAEL LEAPMAN
Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Brian Smith, P.D. Sheehan, R. Chapman, S. Cole, G. Wheeler.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Harry
(BBC1)

AT THE launch of the BBC autumn drama schedules, Charles Denton, the corporation's new head of drama, announced that the new Michael Elphick series *Harry* had "hit written all over it".

The early ratings, however, which show the series losing exactly half of the 14 million audience it inherited from the BBC1 programme, *Casualty*, which runs before it — suggest that Mr Denton failed to see the letter at the beginning of the word.

In *Harry*, Elphick plays a retread of his role in the long-running ITV series *Boon*. This time the hero is Harry Salter, a fiftysomething former Fleet Street hack who, after some bad business with the bottle and the expenses claims, is setting up a news agency in Darlington. Harry's uncertain attempts to stay off the booze — one of the recurrent sub-plots — mirror Elphick's own, a point which played well for pre-publicity interviews but became tedious on screen.

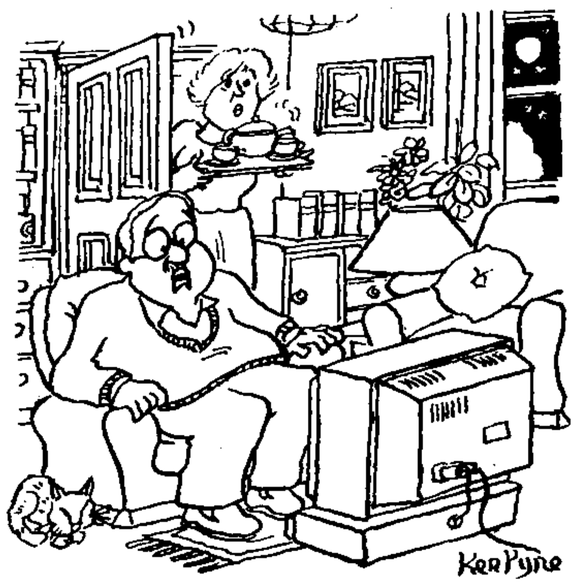
Harry isn't entirely rubbish — there were some nice lines and twists in Mick Ford's early scripts — but, as an attempt at the kind of popular drama hit that BBC1 controller Alan Yentob badly needs, it was seriously miscalculated.

The biggest problem is that the central characters are all journalists: the staff of Harry's agency. Hacks have generally been successful on television only when satirised (*Drop The Dead Donkey, Hot Metal*), rather than when taken seriously, eg in *The Standard*, an old BBC1 flop about a Scottish paper.

The reason for this is that the profession is too morally suspect for its exponents to be peak-time heroes. You can see the reasoning behind *Harry*. It sounds perfectly logical. Virtually all long-running, high-rating TV dramas series have involved professions — doctors, policemen, firemen — that have ready access to tragedies such as murders, fires, crashes and other gory loud explosions. In theory, journalists are a sort of fourth emergency service, who can plausibly be called to precisely the same kinds of events.

But doctors, police, ambulance crews and the fire service are paid not very much money for attempting to ameliorate the effects of tragedies: they are, therefore, figures who command the audience's sympathy and respect. Hacks are paid a great deal of money for dispassionately recording tragedies. They hate themselves for this, and are despised by others for it.

Aware of this, the scripts of *Harry* require Elphick relentlessly to moralise about his work. "Page 4 job. Other peoples' nightmares," he mutters during one sub-plot.



"Old film? It stars Joan Collins before she looked great for her age..."

"What's the count?" he asks callously, wandering among the dead bodies from a motorway pile-up. Yet the series, constantly fretting over Harry's need to make entertainment from tragedy, is part of a genre — peak-time TV drama — which does exactly the same. The central character's unease spreads to the viewer.

Harry's other central difficulty is what is known in serial drama as the Oxford-as-Detroit Syndrome. This refers to the way in which the hunger of serial drama for frequent incident will tend to make the town in which the show is set appear an improbably volcanic place. Specifically, at an average of four deaths per episode, the sleepy Oxford of the *Inspector Morse* series developed a murder rate to rival that of Detroit. Similarly, in *Harry*, the series was set in Darlington because the writers wanted the sense of Harry's purgatorial immersion in a backwater.

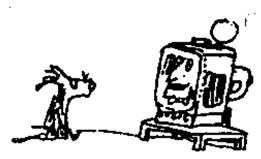
Yet, because this is a peak-time serial on BBC1, the backwater suddenly has to rage with unexpected torrents. In what must be the apotheosis of this problem, last Saturday's episode of *Harry* revolved around a suspected outbreak of bubonic plague in Darlington. At the same time, Harry was hoping to set up a deal with a visiting newspaper proprietor from America; that well-known market for Darlington stories.

The most recent episode also contained a lengthy sub-plot about antiques dealers: in its pre-production neurosis about the need to become a hit BBC1 series, *Harry* was, subconsciously or not, stealing the clothes of one such animal: *Lovejoy*. The presentation of the same episode also bore a mark of the BBC's neurosis about the show's failure to become a hit. During the closing credits of Saturday night's episode of *Casualty*, a shot of Elphick in a hospital bed was superimposed over them. "Michael Elphick visits casualty in a few moments, after an encounter with a gravedigger exposes him to the bubonic plague...!"

Both the opportunistic tie-in to *Casualty* — and the mention of the black death — made this perhaps the most desperate trail in the corporation's history. BBC1 is in a hole and *Harry* has made it deeper.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS



THERE WAS near-apoplexy in the higher echelons of the BBC following a report in *The Times* on 22 September.

It claimed that the corporation's gramophone library, the largest of its kind in the world, might be "dispersed" into the hands of other national museums and libraries. And it said that the Birtian concept of "market testing" was being introduced to the BBC's libraries.

Peter Cox, the newly-appointed supremo of archives and libraries at the Beeb, was swift to deny the story. In a letter to *The Times* he promised there were "no plans for moving parts of the gramophone library's collection" to other institutions such as the National Sound Archive or the British Film Institute.

This came as a surprise to his colleagues, who only a week earlier had received a memo from Cox setting out his plans for the department. In it he had argued that while the gramophone library and the sound library were collections of international importance, "this is not to imply that certain older and less used parts of the collections could not be relocated to other national archives".

Further confusion was provoked when Liz Forgan, head of BBC network radio, issued a memo to staff rubbishing the *Times* article. "There is," she reassured them, "no plan of market testing for Libraries and Archives... As a former journalist I despair of the newspapers. Particularly if their inability to check the simplest story means that I have to return to my keyboard every day to write you alternative copy!"

Cox knew nothing of Forgan's promulgation until someone in a department he was visiting casually mentioned it. He was then shown it on the BBC's computer bulletin board, and was understandably embarrassed. For in his message to staff the previous week, Cox had confidently announced that one of the main aims of his new job was indeed "to develop a broad rolling plan of market testing"... in BBC libraries and archives. It seems he had not troubled to inform la Forgan, his boss, of this fact.

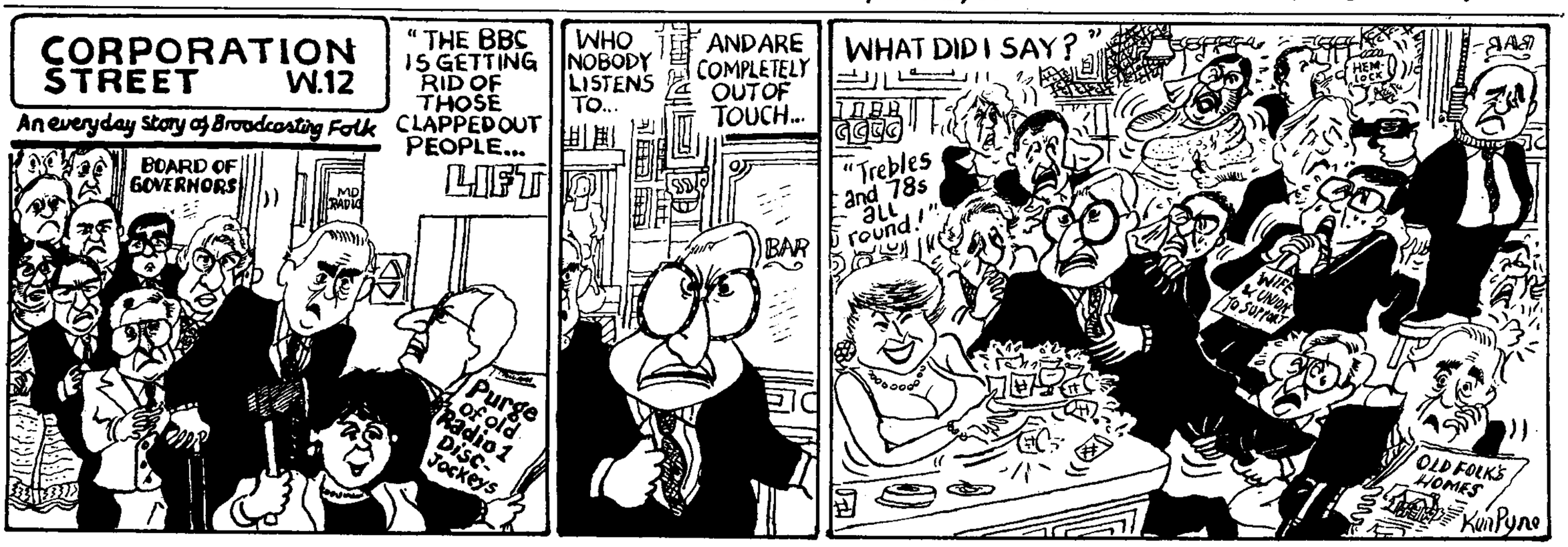
Morale in the libraries and archives department is now at rock bottom. Under the new "internal market" system, producers who need to borrow a record from the gramophone library have to pay a "Producer Choice" fee. Some have found that it is often cheaper and simpler to go out to a shop and buy the record instead.

This is what John Birt describes as "service rationalisation" — and what others might call an absurd waste of time and money.

BAD NEWS from the BBC research department, which employs highly qualified scientists and engineers and whose job — until now — was to keep the BBC, and hence British broadcasting, up to date and independent of Japan and the United States.

Its work is highly regarded internationally, and no other organisation in Britain does anything similar. This presumably explains why the Birtmen have decided to sack all handymen, lab technicians, junior engineers and workshop staff.

Now, every time senior engineers need something moved or a tiny widget built, they



either have to do it themselves or set up a contract to employ an outside firm to do it. You don't need an MBA to realise that this is not going to be cheaper, easier or less bureaucratic than asking a staff technician.

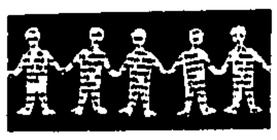
The scientists reckon it will take them twice as long to do their work, but the sackings have not saved anything like half the costs of the department because the people who were dumped were so poorly paid in the first place. The department has been crippled at a relatively small cost saving.

More worryingly, no junior engineers are now being trained, and research staff, like BBC craft departments, are convinced the aim is to get rid of them altogether (however strident the disclaimers). The fear was reinforced when they asked the open and accessible Birtian management to discuss the matter, only to be told that there was no point as everything had been decided.

The BBC is legally obliged to do research as part of its charter. But the combined talents of the Birtmen and the politicians will surely find a way to get out of this when the charter is renewed — perhaps by pointing out that the department is now under-achieving.

This will be the end of British technological *advance in broadcasting* — a field in which until now we have been world leaders.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED



THE *Evening Standard* recently devoted much coverage to the Ministry of Sound, an insufferable nightclub in the Elephant & Castle district.

In addition to a news story about how the club had projected its logo on to the darkened Houses of Parliament as part of a publicity stunt, there was a substantial feature puffing the Ministry as the "queen of clubs".

Could this have anything to do with the fact that one of the entrepreneurs behind its new record label is one Jack Steven, stepson of *Evening Standard* editor Stewart Steven?

AN ARTICLE by Kate Bernard in the "culture" section of the *Sunday Times* described the sensational exhibition visit of artists Gilbert and George to Beijing.

Shurely this wasn't the same Kate Bernard who is the girlfriend of one James Birch, organiser of the exhibition?

FORMER *Sunday People* hackette Heidi Kingstone has just finished writing a book about the recent history of Mirror Group Newspapers.

You might expect David "Rommel" Montgomery, the group's widely despised chief executive, to be trembling at the prospect.

In spite of his dismal record, however, Rommel is confident that la Kingstone's book will present him in an unremittingly heroic light. As well he might be: Heidi Kingstone is his wife.

CHARLES Kennedy, the Liberal Democrat MP, contributed the first in a new series called "Me and my media" to the media pages of the *Grauniad*, in the course of which he revealed that he listens to LBC from nine in the morning till noon and is backing LBC's campaign to keep its franchise.

He omitted to mention that he also appears once a week to discuss politics on LBC's Richard Littlejohn Show.

NOTICE BORES

TRAVESTIES (RSC, Barbican)

"... an insufferable exercise in sixth-form smartypants facetiousness, look-no-hands-cleverness and flashy figure-skating over culturally thin ice."
Martin Hoyle, Mail on Sunday

"... a landmark in British high comedy."
Charles Spencer, Daily Telegraph

HACKWATCH No 47: Godfrey Smith

AS Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill celebrates the tenth anniversary of his installation as editor of the *Sunday Times*, there is one point on which both friends and foes agree: that nothing of the paper he inherited has survived his decade of permanent revolution.

But they are wrong. One corner of the paper remains untouched by his modernising zeal — Godfrey Smith's column.

This is, as Godders himself might put it, a rum do. For the column represents that Old Britain which "Brillo Pad" professes to despise. Oblivious to the subjects which set Neill's pulse a-racing — sunrise industries, satellite TV, discos and bimbos — it inhabits a world bounded by Lord's cricket ground and Oxford University, where no one reads anything more modern than P G Wodehouse and there is honey still for tea.

It is mostly filled with plugs for old chums, especially those with whom he was up at the varsity.

For the benefit of those fortunate few Britons who do not see the *Sunday Times*, here is a digest of his year's output so far.

3 January: Up-to-the minute as ever, Godders has just discovered that something called political correctness is all the rage. "So I gather from *The Politically Correct Phrasebook*, the latest guide from Nigel Rees." Meanwhile, he is cheered to see that his old wartime RAF chum Peter Emery, now a Tory politician, has been made a privy counsellor. "The main role of the modern privy council is to advise the sovereign. Dare I say that she will not get shrewder advice than that on offer from her new privy counsellor?"

17 January: "The Drones is a dining club that celebrates the immortal memory of P G Wodehouse. At our meeting last week we had the signal pleasure of an entertainment by Benny Green..." Green, it turns out, is another old chum.

24 January: "I think as Valentine's day looms again we should offer a magnum of fizz for the finest original short love story." Capital!

31 January: The search for a short love story is "off to a racing start" with a "humdinger from the admirable Brenda Pitcher". The humdinger runs thus: "Mr and Mrs Mole made love. The earth moved."

7 February: Time for some more book-plugging: Godders has been dipping into the *World Almanac and Book of Facts*. He has also had a bracing dip in the "convivial" memoirs of James Agate, formerly "the celebrated dramatic critic of this newspaper".

14 February: Our columnist has been to lunch with the High Sheriff of East Sussex. Ian Cox, "the present incumbent of that ancient job", is an old chum who was at Oxford with Godders. The lunch, we learn, was great fun. Meanwhile, "our quest for the perfect love story led us into some rum places". One reader submitted this brief royal romance: "One fancies you". "Lord love us, that's torn it," Godders chortles, unable to contain his mirth. "Over to you, Calcutt!"

21 February: Godders has been "browsing through" a book of photos of one of our most distinguished actors. "Raise your glasses, please, to that enduring thespian, John Mills, a spry 85 years old tomorrow."

7 March: The columnist is, as so often, in nostalgic mood. "What price", one of his readers asks, "the boat trains of yore which drew in alongside a taxi rank with porters, if not trolleys, at every door?" Godders couldn't agree more. "What indeed", he echoes.

21 March: Godders has been browsing in "a hypnotically interesting miscellany called *High Flyers*," a collection of anecdotes about his old service, the RAF. This estimable volume is, he reveals, "a trip down memory lane".

28 March: Time for a grumble about the modern world. Godders is alarmed to discover that some young women nowadays call themselves "Ms". It is, he feels, "a depressing word", and "I am indeed sorry to see that some of our sterling headmistresses have now adopted the prefix." He wonders what Jane Austen — "the immortal Jane" — would have made of it.

25 April: Godders has been on holiday to France — or "*la belle France*" as he prefers to call it — with some old chums. He fills much of his column with a detailed account of what he ate.

2 May: Godders is still recovering from his holiday. "A month is a rum time in the human span," he observes, waxing philosophical. "Coming home, as I've just done after a month away, the front pages look exactly the same: Serbia and Soweto vie for the headlines." Who would have thought it?

9 May: Godders has been dipping into "Jonathan Rice's masterly new book, *Curiosities of Cricket*", which greatly tickled his funny-bone.

16 May: Oxford beckons: "Invited to visit my old college the other day, I found the place as breathtakingly beautiful as ever, the service in chapel exactly as it had always been and everybody in refreshingly high spirits." There has been one change: the college now admits women as well as men. "Good for you, girls", Godders gamely opines.

23 May: Books, books, books — a chap can't get enough of 'em. "On to my desk last week fell the fourth edition of *Modern First Editions*, required reading for book-trufflers like me." Its author is his old chum Joseph Connolly. "Thank you, Jo", Godders writes.

6 June: After "dipping into a volume of James Agate's diaries, as I always do when feeling the need to relax", Godders feels relaxed enough to address another hot topic: "Let nobody say the art of the headline is dead. Our gallant *confreres* at the *Sun* had a pippin last Thursday for the Queen's triumph at Epsom races: One's Won. Send me better if you can."

13 June: Godders has had a letter from "my old chum Peter New", deploring the number of regional accents one hears on the BBC these days.

20 June: Godders has been watching cricket — or "the noble game", as he likes to call it. "At this time of the year, it seems to me, all roads lead to Lord's, or should."

18 July: Godders' old chum Nigel Rees — "wordsmith Nigel Rees", as he dubs him — has a question: who was Speedy Gonzalez? "I'll wager," says Godders, "that his reputed speed was legendary. Fizz for anyone who can prove me wrong."

1 August: The resourceful columnist has another question: "Which is very probably the funniest book ever written?" He hopes that readers "will send tidings of some unheeded comic masterpiece. But I shan't put too much money on it". And, so saying, he disappears for another long break. "See you after the hols."

5 September: While on his hols, Godders has been musing on that delicious creature, the English language. "The graceful artefacts wrought from it every day by our scriveners are totally taken for granted: the mighty line of Bernard Levin, the bubbling fecundity of Keith Waterhouse, the majestic plainsong of William Rees-Mogg." He concludes that the British — or "the island race", in his arresting phrase — are fortunate to have "the greatest language in the world".

12 September: "You have to go back a bit to remember those delicious Letters from Paris that Nancy Mitford used to write for this paper. Still, if you missed them you have a treat ahead: a whopping new book of her scrumptious letters." Godders also finds room to plug the Fairfield Manor Hotel, which has introduced "Unromantic Breaks" — plastic flowers, brown ale, woolly bedsocks, and all for £120 per person for two nights. "I wager it will be a smash," he chuckles.

19 September: Birthday greetings to another old chum, Sir Robin Day. "I've known Robin since we were undergraduates," Godders reveals.

3 October: Godders has been dipping into a "riveting" new volume, *Guinness International Who's Who of Sport*, which discloses that the American swimmer Eleanor Holm was banned from the 1936 Olympics for quaffing champagne while training. He finds this news quite side-splitting: "Whatever next!"

What indeed?

READER HOLIDAY OFFER 93

GREASE
PLUS 3-COURSE MEAL

Reading Evening Post

NOOKS and CORNERS

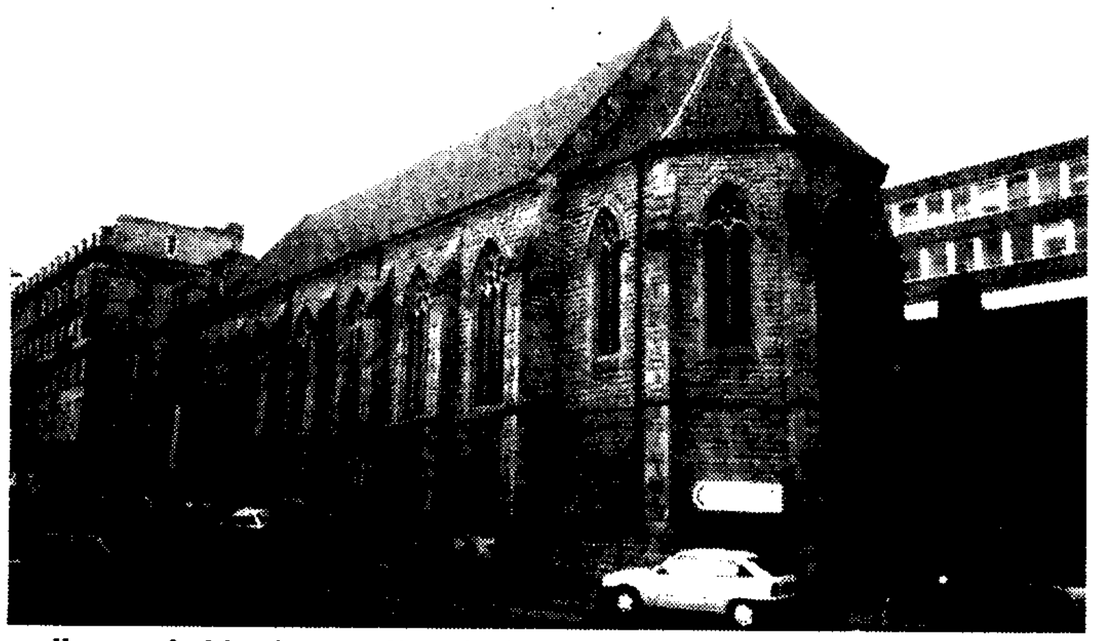
PERHAPS this column should be renamed "Church Times", as I could fill every issue with horror stories about the wilful and gratuitous spoilation of fine churches.

The Anglicans are bad enough, but at least the "faculty jurisdiction" system gives some protection against clerical vandals — although a Consistory Court has now decided to endorse the egregious posturing of the Rev "Jim" Butterworth at St Anne's Wrenthorpe, near Wakefield, who has greatly upset his flock by cheerfully announcing that he wants to burn the pulpit and cut up the altar to make room for more hand-clapping and guitar-playing.

As for Roman Catholics, the various art and architecture committees and liturgical commissions are so much cosmetic flannel. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way when a parish priest decides on a re-ordering — least of all his poor long-suffering parishioners.

My readers will, I hope, be disgusted to learn that Mgr Canon E. McBride and his deeply sensitive, caring architect, Mr Anthony Rossi, Dip Arch, Dip Con Studies (York), RIBA, are now busy smashing up the sanctuary of Sir Giles Scott's beautiful little church in Sheringham (*Eyes* 824 & 826), sawing off the ends of the marble altar and hacking bits off the reredos.

Meanwhile, down in Plymouth the parishioners at the cathedral, a cruciform Gothic Revival building of 1855-58, are more than a little upset by the proposal to throw out almost every bit of furniture and place the altar right under the crossing tower. The Friends of Plymouth Cathedral have offered



well-argued objections on liturgical, practical, moral and aesthetic grounds to these proposals, but the bishop, the Rt Rev Christopher Budd, greatly dislikes opposition. Indeed, he has accused his flock of having "very little in faith terms". These unfortunates are now so very distressed by the way their clergy treats them they are being counselled — by an Anglican.

My picture shows St Andrew's Roman Catholic church in Worswick Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a Gothic building of 1875 designed by T.G. Leadbitter. All its original fittings are intact and all the fine interior needs is a careful restoration to make it look splendid. Instead, the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, who took over the parish in 1987, propose to create a central sanctuary space, ram in a gallery and replace all the pews by plastic chairs. This will cost £300,000.

As usual, not everyone is happy and angry parishioners have written to the diocesan rag, the *Northern Cross*, to complain. The editor claims to welcome "the consultation process" in his columns and "open, fearless debate of such issues", but I am afraid the parish priest, Fr Colm Hayden, gave the game away when he used the Sunday Mass to denounce "armchair liturgists who sought to make themselves important by writing letters to the newspapers".

The fact is that the Roman Catholic clergy of Britain cannot tolerate the laity having opinions of their own and regard opposition to proposed "re-orderings" as treason and heresy. But this authoritarian outlook cannot alone account for the sheer wasteful destructiveness of so many schemes — the throwing out of beautiful furnishings which, as I have pointed out before (*Eye* 822), is not required by Vatican II and is, in fact, in contradiction to *Documents of the Liturgy*, the circular letter *Opera artis* and other papal pronouncements on such matters.

So these smug vandals are not mindlessly "obeying orders". Do they just hate beauty, hate the past, hate anything sophisticated or elaborate that they cannot understand? I am reminded of a letter that the great J.F. Bentley, architect of Westminster Cathedral, wrote just over a century ago: "The general run of men who are placed in clerical positions of trust, and who are called to sit in judgement on the work we do, belong to the gutter as far as taste is concerned." How very true.

The point is that such things do not go on in Belgium, or Germany, or Italy. In other Catholic countries re-orderings are carried out sensitively, without smashing up beautiful and historic furnishings. So what is to be done?

One answer is suggested by Mr Anthony Keogh, a solicitor, who has successfully obtained a high court injunction preventing Cardinal Hume and his parish priest, Fr Patrick Heekin, from demolishing a marble altar, reredos and baldacchino in the Church of Our Lady of Muswell in north London in another cretinous "re-ordering".

The church was built in 1938, but the altar was installed in 1950 as a memorial to parishioners who died in the second world war. Mr Keogh, a parishioner for more than 40 years, went to law reluctantly because the plans had been put into effect "surreptitiously and without announcement" — naturally — and as all other avenues for protest and debate had proved fruitless. He was advised that while the high court could not interfere in matters of aesthetics, the demolition of a publicly-funded monument could come under the jurisdiction of civil law. Very often, the furnishings casually destroyed by ignorant, arrogant priests were paid for by donors or by public subscription.

So, good people of Plymouth and elsewhere, please take note of Mr Keogh's stand. Too late, alas, for the dispossessed parishioners of Bootle and Sheringham.

'Piloti'

THE ROAD LOBBY (1)

REGULAR *Eye* readers will be aware of the influence of the road lobby on both Tory and Labour politicians.

Since 1980 capital expenditure on roads (excluding maintenance) has increased from £2.3 billion to £3 billion in 1992. Such is the strength of the lobby there is no question of slashing such extravagant public spending.

Public transport, meanwhile, is being hard hit: investment in British Rail's existing services is at its lowest ever, and the 22 percent in government support for social rail services is forcing unprecedented cuts in services this month. The main purpose of privatisation will be to rid the treasury of its rail-subsidy burden.

Bus deregulation in 1986 had the same purpose and effect. Money which previously subsidised buses has effectively been switched to the road-construction coffers. Usage of buses (except in London, where they are still state controlled) has dropped by about 25 percent since they were privatised; fares have increased by 25 percent.

In its propaganda the British Roads Federation — the road lobby's representative on earth — says buses and trains are significantly more fuel-efficient than the car only when they are fully laden. This is nonsense: a train or bus only 60 percent full is about four times more fuel-efficient than a typically-loaded car. Public transport also creates less pollution per passenger and makes better use of land.

Unfortunately, the anti-public transport rubbish put out by the BRF has had great influence. This makes it all the more surprising that the BRF membership list (as at 31 December 1992) includes the **Bus and Coach Council** (the bus industry's trade association); and **National Express Ltd**.

ON THE RAILWAYS

THE enthusiasm of British Rail staff for privatisation can be measured by the short career of Peter Borer, a whizzkid brought in to supervise the sale of British Rail telecoms, the communications division of BR's network.

Borer has suddenly and rather mysteriously left BR. BR says he has finished the job he came to do. Most of his staff (and the *Independent*) say he's resigned.

His leaving is said to be connected with frantic calls round BR executives seeking support and his discussions with the firms who hope to take over some of the more lucrative parts of BR Telecoms. One call was left on an answering machine.

BRITISH Rail is continuing to force passengers on to the roads.

Wheelchair-bound Yorkshire pensioner Millicent Baldwin-Davis spent a week's holiday in North Wales after travelling there by train — with her three-wheel scooter wheelchair and no problems.

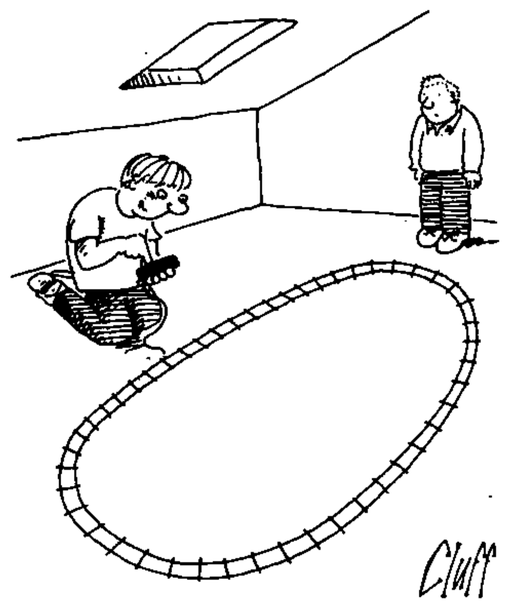
Her return journey was not so smooth, however. For when BR staff at Llandudno wheeled her on to her train, they promptly kicked her off again claiming that the wheelchair would have blocked the exits.

Ms Baldwin-Davis was abandoned with her luggage on the platform and had to return 100 miles to her Halifax home by taxi at a cost of £90 — ruining the end of her holiday and helping to clog up the roads into the bargain.

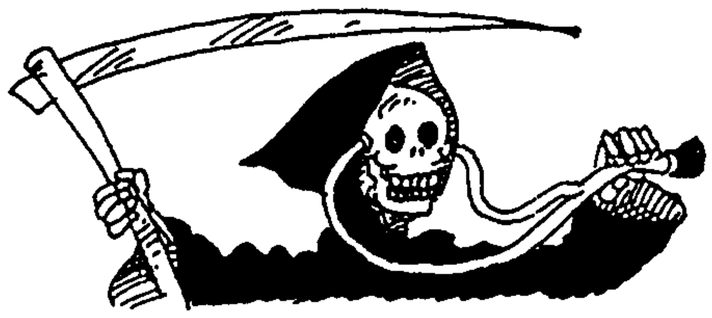
A DISASTER of much greater magnitude might have been narrowly averted when a drunk driver ploughed his train into Maidstone East station in the early hours of 6 September.

While much was made of the fact that the driver often carried nuclear waste and irradiated fuel on his early morning runs, scant attention was paid to a wagon at the end of the crashed train, which was not derailed in the accident.

It was swiftly removed after the event, but not before it had featured in some early pictures of the accident. According to nuclear train watchers, it appeared "identical" to the cylindrical wagons into which spent German fuel is loaded for transport to Sellafield.



"I'm running a winter timetable"



DOING THE ROUNDS

EARLIER this year, Drs Sam Everington and Aneez Esmail were arrested by the fraud squad for exposing racial discrimination in the shortlisting procedure for hospital job interviews by sending out spoof CVs, identical in all but name.

After the case was laughed out of court, it was referred to Sir Robert Kilpatrick CBE, MD, FRCP, president of the General Medical Council, who accused them of "not very professional" behaviour. Not everyone would agree. At the recent Overseas Doctors' Association annual dinner, attended by Sir Robert and Mrs Bottomley, Dr Everington received a standing ovation.

Sir Robert has not had a good year. His much publicised plans to weed out dodgy doctors and make the profession look more accountable have fallen by the wayside, apparently because there isn't time to debate them in the parliamentary session. The real reason, that the government doesn't want to pick up the bill for retraining doctors, is something of a let-off for the GMC, which would have been badly mauled by both sides of the House.

Sir Robert has been trying for some while to patch things up with the Labour party, but David Blunkett's open hostility towards the GMC prompted him to write a stern letter of complaint; not to Blunkett, but to John Smith. This so angered the shadow health minister that he has now pledged to abolish the GMC altogether.

● THE USE of the NHS as a safety net for private hospitals was demonstrated in **Bath** recently, where a patient was transferred from the private **Bath Clinic** to the **Royal United hospital NHS trust** when complications set in after her operation.

With her came a thick file of private notes outlining her treatment at the clinic. It included three pages of foolscap from the domestics giving full details of when the television had last been polished, and some helpful nursing notes about the patient's predilection for bananas over apples. However, there was no mention of vital information such as the patient's allergies, drugs, past medical history, previous surgery or why the operation had been carried out in the first place.

● THE **Wellhouse (aka Shithouse) NHS trust** currently encompasses both **Edgware general** and **Barnet hospitals**, though perhaps not for much longer. The £4 million-indebted trust has just lost its £11 million 94-95 contract from **Brent and Harrow health authority**, which could force the closure of one of the sites.

Last year the Shithouse needed a £3 million government bail out, and it is only being kept afloat now by a £3.2 million subsidy from **North West Thames regional health authority**. The third wave trust was only granted independence in the first place because managers claimed it was just £350,000 in debt on opt-out day. An independent report by accountants Touche Ross has since revealed that the Shithouse was in fact £3 million in the red before it started trading. As a DoH spokesman put it: "Mrs Bottomley is unaware of the crisis."

● AN 83-YEAR-OLD **Birmingham** woman has died after waiting 30 hours in hospital for emergency surgery. After admission to **Queen Elizabeth hospital** she waited seven hours on a trolley before managers decided there was no free bed and she was transferred to **Selly Oak hospital**. It was a further 24 hours before she reached the operating theatre.

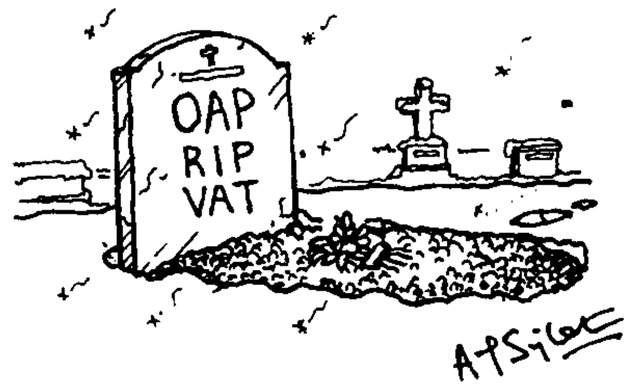
Most hospitals in Birmingham have been forced to take on extra emergency work since the closure of the **General hospital**, and many GPs have complained of difficulties getting emergencies admitted. The situation is unlikely to be helped by **South Birmingham health authority's** closure of a further 120 beds to relieve its £24 million deficit. The situation is so farcical in the area that hospitals are even offering MOTs, legal services and shopping malls.

Dudley Road hospital, part of South Birmingham, is so cash-strapped it is touting its empty wards around film companies. Central TV and a company working for Channel Four have already taken advantage, using hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of medical equipment that the hospital can no longer afford to use as a backdrop.

Dudley Road has also taken its mechanics off servicing ambulances and other hospital vehicles to offer MOTs to all-comers for £19. TVs running constant adverts have been installed in all its waiting areas — hospital chiefs reasoning that if patients have to wait for hours, the hospital may as well try to profit from them. In the same vein, a babywear shop has been installed in the maternity ward. At the **Royal Shrewsbury hospital** bosses have rented out offices in the hospital to a solicitor... who specialises in advising patients how to sue the NHS.

● PAEDIATRICIANS at **Bristol's Southmead hospital NHS trust** were recently congratulated by managers for drastically reducing the length of stay of babies on the special care baby unit (SCBU), thus saving the troubled trust thousands of pounds.

Celebrations were cut short when it was



pointed out that a short stay on SCBU usually meant that a baby had died, as was the case with some of the very premature babies who had been treated on the unit in the previous month, and that a three-month stay was far more likely to reflect a happier outcome.

● **NORTH East Thames regional health authority** has decided to split **Essex and Herts health services (EHHS)** in two. The breakaway community unit will be policed by an additional chief executive, costing £50,000 a year, and the usual entourage of administrators.

EHHS spokesman Pat Trinnaman stoutly defended the decision: "It will mean that where there is one chief executive at the moment, there will be two and there will also be two management teams. There will be duplications, but we won't have to duplicate everything and the two teams won't be as large as the one we have now." The casualty department at nearby **Bishop's Stortford hospital** was recently threatened with closure to save £23,000 a year.

● **UNITED Health, Scunthorpe's** newly formed health authority, is to house itself in the former **Glanford hospital** in **Brigg** — after a £1.2 million conversion. The hospital was closed because the health authority was unable to find £100,000 to keep it open. The money might be better spent on the £1.4 million indebted **Goole hospitals trust**, but as Michael Page, United Health's director of quality and consumerism put it: "The issue is not really one of money, but one of changing styles of health care".

● IN 1990, managers at the old **South Warwickshire health authority** cut beds and jobs to stave off a £1.5 million debt. They also spent £10,000 on paintings and antique furniture, some of which adorned the offices of the chief executive and chairman. Auditors for the new **Warwickshire health authority** have decided that the purchases were "an inappropriate use of trust resources" and they are soon to be put up for auction.

CORRECTION: **The Royal National Orthopaedic NHS trust** has *not* put a two-month freeze on non-urgent operations, as was stated in *Eye* 829, but continues to operate on patients from **Camden and Islington health authority** in accordance with its contract.

M.D.

ENERGY NEWS

THE LAW has delivered another odd judgment in Greenpeace v Thorp, awarding equal honours to the environment and the nuclear industry.

At the first hearing it was decreed that while testing of the Sellafield thermal oxide reprocessing plant could start, Greenpeace could have a full judicial hearing of its case. At the judicial review the next judge, Mr Justice Otton, ruled that British Nuclear Fuels could carry on testing — but then rejected BNFL's argument that Greenpeace had no *locus standi*, uttering extravagant praise for the worthy environmentalists.

The second verdict means Greenpeace can challenge the main decision, when the government takes it, to sanction the start-up without a public inquiry. BNFL will not be able to argue that Greenpeace has no standing on the matter.

It will also be a different case because the testing decision was based mainly on the small amount of radiation it would produce. For Thorp itself, the figures will be vast. Each tonne of reprocessed fuel will yield about a tenth of a cubic metre of high-level waste, a cubic metre of intermediate-level waste and six cubic metres of low-level waste.

Most of Thorp's contracts with foreign utilities have waste-return clauses. However, BNFL has realised that shipping such huge volumes back to the countries of origin will be politically difficult, hazardous and prohibitively expensive. So it has devised a "substitution" strategy to return slightly more high-level waste in return for keeping all the ILW and LLW.

This would greatly reduce transport costs. But the strategy depends on the UK having somewhere to store tens of thousands of tonnes of lethally dangerous ILW. BNFL is pinning its hopes on the £3 billion-plus underground repository Nirex is hoping to excavate at Sellafield, but plans are encountering increasing delays.

Nirex admits it will not be in a position to say whether or not Sellafield's geology is even suitable before 1997. The earliest possible completion date has thus slipped to 2008. While many consider the second decade of the next century more realistic, there is mounting belief that the geology will rule the site out.

A NEW director-general of gas has been appointed to replace Sir James McKinnon who upset privatised British Gas by interfering in the way it exploited its monopoly.

The new Ofgas boss should give less cause for complaint. Clare Spottiswoode's first job after university was as a treasury economist, and so she was educated at a formative stage in the importance of leaving the market alone. Her latest job has been as member of the engineering "deregulation task force", tearing up anything that gets in the way of untrammelled profit-making.

This will be welcome news to Lord (Peter) Walker, the energy secretary who privatised gas and then became a director of British Gas. He has since taken on the additional job of helping unemployed miners — who have been thrown out of work by competition from, er, British Gas.

A funny old world, indeed. Walker's old contacts in government must have been useful in obtaining a regulator amenable to the company's needs.

GOVERNMENT nuclear inspectors have fallen out with Nuclear Electric over the computer system controlling the new £2 billion Sizewell B nuclear power station, due to start loading fuel in December.

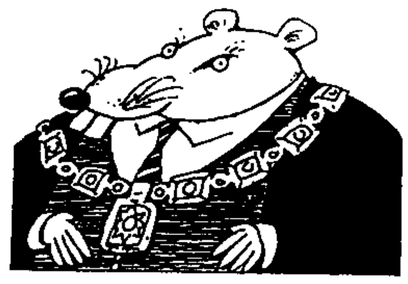
The disagreement centres on whether the computer can be relied upon to fail once every 10,000 times it is needed, as was originally guestimated, or only once every 1,000 times.

Nuclear Electric has now dropped its failure requirement by a factor of 10, claiming this will not affect plant safety.

This is a very cynical move, as the experts are all divided.

Some query whether it is possible to carry out such a complex numerical computation, and wonder if Nuclear Electric has even tried to do so. Others fear the company's judgement has been influenced solely by its inability to demonstrate the 1 in 10,000 scenario.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



MURKEYSIDE

ONYX, the French-based international rubbish firm which took over Liverpool's refuse service in a controversial deal two years ago, has admitted that its Liverpool operation is losing money.

Onyx said it could do the job for £3.9 million — half the cost of the council's in-house operation. But it now wants to charge £3.5 million more, making the original bid look suspiciously like a loss leader.

A high-level Onyx delegation, headed by Edward Du Pont, met city councillors recently and dressed up demands for doubling the charges as a move to start a more "environmentally friendly" recycling operation.

Councillors did not take kindly to news that this would involve further job losses, and found it hard to believe Onyx would "relocate" scouse binmen earning the grand sum of £100 a week to operations elsewhere in the UK.

The potential fire hazards of the Onyx scheme to introduce wheelie bins to the city's narrow back entries was another cause for concern, and rumours that bin collections might become fortnightly instead of weekly didn't go down well with councillors who face re-election next May.

The Onyx contract with Liverpool has another five years to run, but should the council dispense with Onyx's services it is unlikely that a council-run service will ever be reestablished. Other local authorities, such as Birmingham, who are thinking of putting contracts Onyx's way for much longer periods should take care the ante doesn't rise for them too.

CONTROVERSY continues over the contract won by Liverpool city council to lay cable TV.

A report by accountants Peat Marwick says losses on the deal were not £1.1 million as first supposed, but might be as high as £5.3 million. Nor can misappropriation of funds — as opposed to the normal gross incompetence of council officers and elected representatives — be completely ruled out, say the accountants.

The report cost Liverpool taxpayers a mere £50,000: small beer if the reputed losses of more than £5 million are accurate. The district auditor has been called in to give a definitive verdict.

BRECKNOCK

IN SLEEPY Brecknock the best way to get a council house is to be related to a councillor.

Indeed, the mid-Wales authority seems to be bidding to become the council the ombudsman criticises most — it is now awaiting a fourth drubbing over its curious housing allocation policies.

Councillor Eddie James has the distinction of being named in two of the ombudsman's previous salvoes. He failed to declare an interest when his cousin's application for one of Brecknock's 2,500 homes was discussed. When he was eventually persuaded to leave the meeting he asked a chum to relay information while he was outside.

In a separate shenanigan his son got a house while Sandra Jones, a mother of five living in

slummy conditions, was denied one. The ombudsman ordered the council to apologise to Mrs Jones and to pay her £750 compensation.

Last year's mayor, Mrs Mair Griffiths, is also in the ombudsman's black book — she broke the rules by taking part in a meeting when an application by her cousin's son came up.

Moves are now afoot to have the offenders suspended, and the ombudsman's fourth report is eagerly awaited.

LAMBETH

LOONY Lambeth has found an exciting new way to spend its ever-decreasing funds — paying the foreign court fines of children who are supposed to be in its care.

Last month council officials were astonished to learn that a 16-year-old girl had absconded from a council-run home and had been arrested for possessing drugs — in Jamaica! Until the Jamaican police rang up, social workers didn't even realise the girl was missing. Nevertheless, the town hall agreed to pay her £3,400 fine.

Perhaps the girl got the idea from Lambeth's occasionally barmy neighbour, Southwark, which recently sent a bailed youth facing an arson charge on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Caribbean.

Will Lambeth henceforth pay fines for possession of drugs incurred by any of its residents? With some £20 million of council funds "missing" already and debts approaching £200 million, this could be a popular measure to introduce with council elections coming up in just over six months.

with 'New Muckspreader'

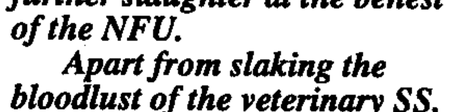
GILLIAN "mud on boots" Shephard, hailed as the great white hope for farming, had one great advantage over the legendary *Drittsekk* whom she replaced as agriculture minister: nobody could possibly do a worse job than he did.

There was even euphoric speculation that she might wrest control of her lunatic ministry from the mad officials who populate MAFF's Tolworth headquarters. Alas, even a country lass from good farming stock is not up to the job.

Responding to John Major's dream of a deregulated Britain, la Shephard has launched her own "re-regulation" programme, the centrepiece of which is to set up a whole new army of mad, highly paid officials. This new monster, to be called the National Meat Hygiene Service, will, if Gillian's officials have their way, take control of the inspection of red meat and poultry.

Our Gill has obviously accepted her officials' advice that a deregulation programme is the best possible excuse for a massive new instalment of, er, *re*gulation. All she needs to do now is explain why much of the £7 million start-up costs have already been spent on a palatial new office complex in suburban York, even though the service has not yet been sanctioned by parliament.

Are our MPs so irrelevant that officials no longer need to ask permission before launching their next gravy train?

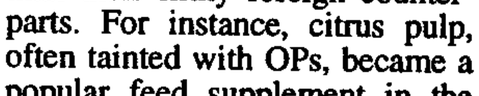


AT LEAST officials of the new meat inspecting "service" will confine their attentions to animals that are dead. Not so the mad officials in Tolworth who follow the inspired leadership of nice Mr Meldrum, the government's chief vet (see Eyes passim).

Given the first whiff of a problem, Meldrum's storm troopers from the State Veterinary Service are on their bikes executing their own version of the "final solution": slaughtering whatever animal species they can lay their hands on.

Thus it is that more than 1,200 badgers have been killed since 1971 in an attempt to rid the county of Gwent of the dreaded scourge of bovine tuberculosis. Undeterred by the fact that in 20 years of unbridled slaughter only one badger has ever been found to have TB, the state vets plan further slaughter at the behest of the NFU.

Apart from slaking the bloodlust of the veterinary SS, the ostensible reason is the misfortune of elderly Gwent farmer John Williams, who recently lost 78 prime dairy cows to the disease. What a pity the best available evidence suggests that TB-affected badgers probably catch the disease from cows, rather than the other way around.



READER Andrew J. Wilson of Brussels asks for enlightenment on how "mad cow" disease could be caused by the use of nerve-gas OP chemicals, rather than — as nice Mr Meldrum believes — by eating diseased sheep's brains.

He asks perfectly reasonably why BSE didn't appear long ago, since OPs have been used to treat cattle for decades — and why it hasn't broken out in other parts of the world where OPs are also used on cows.

The answer is simple. For OPs to inflict the kind of damage on the nervous system which leads to BSE, they have to be of the particular variety which cause mutation of the genes. It was only in 1984 and 1985 that UK farmers were forced to use these mutagenic OPs, after less harmful products had been effectively withdrawn.

UK cattle were also exposed to increasingly diverse sources of OPs at the same time, more so than their filthy foreign counterparts. For instance, citrus pulp, often tainted with OPs, became a popular feed supplement in the mid-80s, as did cereal screenings which were frequently treated with OPs. And many cattle not treated for warble fly were dosed with OPs to control lice, or fed OPs to kill worms.

What is surprising is that the agriculture ministry has continued to support the increasingly discredited feed theory. People living in Brussels may, however, be forgiven as they live in a peculiar world of their own...

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

THE MANAGIN' DIRECTOR OF TOSSA SUPERMARKETS IS COMIN' UP FROM LONDON GEORGE HE'S DOIN A SPOT CHECK ON THE LOCAL BRANCH!
BLOODY HELL!
RIGHT!! WE'D BETTER MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT ALL OUR FRUIT AN' VEG IS THE REGULATION SIZE AN' SHAPE! NO BLEMISHES!
NO MARKS!
TOSSA
YOU CAN NEVER GET A DECENT AIM OTHERWISE!

SALLY DEEDES

ANOTHER *Eye* reader to join the growing band of Pickfords fans is foreign correspondent John Clark.

When his mother died in 1982, Mr Clark was living abroad and so put her belongings into storage at Pickfords' Hove warehouse. The firm sent an inventory of "all the effects now held in store". In 1987 the furniture was moved to Pickfords' Horsham depot "to continue our high standard of service", and was finally delivered to Mr Clark's London flat last June.

Mr Clark noticed that seven of the more valuable pieces of furniture — not the ordinary pieces — had gone missing. An inventory was produced with the delivery, dated 1987. It made no mention of the missing Regency sofa table (value £5,500); early 19th century card table (£1,600); and Victorian walnut chair (£1,500).

To make matters worse, several of the teachests bore stains, indicating that they had been standing in liquid long enough to ruin some of the contents: an early 16-volume set of Dickens; and Mrs Clark's bible, given to her in 1902, which now resembles a "hard grey brick".

Having checked the discrepancies with the original inventory, Mr Clark rang Pickfords. He received a call from Mike Tarrant, the managing director, during which Mr Tarrant said the firm had "cocked up and we shall pay for our sins". He assured Mr Clark he would personally intervene to make sure there would be a quick and fair solution.

Unfortunately, the case was put in the hands of Pickfords' legal department. Mr Clark claimed £1,570, being the amount he reckoned he had spent between August 87 and June 93 storing the effects he believed to be there but, according to Pickfords' paperwork, were not. He claimed £8,850 for the furniture.

Eye readers will not be surprised to learn that Pickfords could find no trace of the missing articles and said the consignment had been underinsured. The firm offered £4,705 for the furniture, £260 for the teachests and £240 as a "partial refund of storage costs in respect of the items which appear to have been mislaid in store".

After complaining yet again, Mr Clark had the storage charges refunded completely.

IT IS A truth universally acknowledged that it costs more to be poor than it does to be rich.

Take Anglian Water, for example. It allows cash-strapped and budget conscious customers to collect water stamps from the post office. When they have saved enough to pay their monthly instalment, they then have to pay an extra 75p for the privilege of paying them back to the privatised water monopoly through the post office, as Anglian won't accept stamps through the post.

This amounts to an extra £9 a year on top of the normal water rates. So who benefits?

Likewise the TV licence budget scheme, which costs £5 more if you pay by instalments. You also have to pay by direct debit, which means you have to have a working current bank account. Very useful for the unemployed. Car tax also costs more if you can only afford to pay for six months instead of the full year. Any other examples gratefully received.

Letters

Private Eye

Oil in troubled waters

Dear Lord Gnome,

Hesitant as I am to correct such a respected member of the Upper House, I must write quickly if I am to deprive my lawyer of the pleasure and fee of doing so. I did not coordinate any deal secret or otherwise to supply Brunei oil to South Africa in breach of UN sanctions. Had I done so, perhaps I would find it easier to afford a battalion of lawyers to convince you I didn't.

Yours,
ALAN DUNCAN MP,
House of Commons, London SW1.

Mirror image

Sir,

I can happily disregard the rest of the twaddle you wrote about the DAILY MIRROR *last week, but the item relating to the murderer and kidnapper Michael Sams cannot be overlooked.*

You claimed that the MIRROR *paid £15,000 to the mother of Michael Sams and another £7,500 to Hopkinson's News Agency for acting as an intermediary.*

This is a complete fabrication.

No money was paid to Sams's mother by any route.

No money was paid to the news agency.

A cursory cuttings check would have shown that the MIRROR *did not focus on the story of Michael Sams's mother.*

Try another newspaper with fewer principles and less news judgement.

For reliable information about the Sams affair I would recommend the paperback "Murder with Menaces", Headline Press, price £4.99.

It was written by our reporter Rod Chaytor, who spent more than a year on the case.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN LYNAS,
Assistant Editor, Daily Mirror, London EC1.

Cutting the crap

Sir,

With reference to your item on the DAILY MIRROR*'s artificial means of boosting circulation, via its fuel station promotion (*EYE *829).*

I was recently offered a free copy of said rag at a filling station near Dover, whilst on my way to catch a ferry. Not being a huge fan of complete crap, I politely declined, whereupon the till operator gave an exasperated sigh, explaining: "I'm fed up with people refusing to take them. You're about the 20th so far this morning."

I was 6.30am.

Yours with a pocket full of Tiger Tokens (but no DAILY MIRROR*),*
DON KEYFIELD,
Hale, Cheshire.

Balls-up

Sir,

I write to wish your other readers many hours of fun in trying to find FA Premier League soccer on DSF (Media News, 24th September).

However, they won't find it.

BSkyB does not sell English soccer overseas for the simple reason that it doesn't own the rights. We do.

This incorrect story first surfaced many months ago; the record was clearly put straight by BSkyb and ourselves at the time.

If you were unsure of the facts, why didn't you phone?

Yours sincerely,
RICK PARRY,
Chief Executive, FA Premier League, London W2.

Signing... not resigning

Sir,

You are mistaken in your edition of Sept. 24th. Sir Robin Buchanan is still Chairman of Wessex Regional Health Authority, or at least signing letters in that capacity. Sir Robin announced that he would resign when the Secretary of State could find a suitable successor.

I wonder what the fact that such a successor has not yet been appointed says about both the Secretary of State and Sir Robin's qualities.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HENDERSON,
Alton, Hants.

Putting the boot in

Sir,

In response to "Football News", EYE *829. For the past 4 years I have supported both Millwall Football Club and the equal opportunities policy of my employer, the London Borough of Lewisham.*

I've attended football matches in England and Scotland for 25 years and unfortunately witnessed racist morons (albeit a very small minority) at every club I've visited. Millwall are no better or worse. The club has made greater efforts than most to confront and fight racism in football but a dreary stereotype that has been perpetuated by the media fits neatly into the pigeonhole of tabloid mythology.

Copyright of new series: "Pseudmanballs"

When Mr Beacon was elected, through a process of thuggish intimidation at the Polling Stations, I knew that an ill-informed connection would be made between "Millwall Isle of Dogs constituency, Tower Hamlets" and "Millwall Football Club, Senegal Fields".

Skinhead-dinosaurs are present in one form or another in most strata of life and Mr Jakszyk had the misfortune to be in the vicinity of some that day. Conveniently for media coverage (even in your cruel but fair organ, John!) it's a story, coz it's Millwall.

As that eminent Chelsea Shed boot-boy might have said, "a not inconsiderable amount of people, in my judgement, don't like us, we don't care". In fact Reg Burr could sell Millwall's "theme-tune" as a slogan for the forthcoming conferencezzzzzzz...

Yours faithfully,
BERNIE KAESTNER,
London SE15.

Belfast telegraph

Sir,

In your "Letter from Israel" (Eye 829) your correspondent makes the statement that "Very few Israelis, of course, are familiar with Northern Ireland..."

May I suggest that one who most certainly is, is the former President, Chaim Hertzog, if only for the fact that he is an Ulsterman who was born in Belfast!!!

Yours sincerely,
HARRY IRWIN,
Ravenhill, Belfast.

HUSBAND

Arkell revisited

Sir,

Ms Zabihyan, as the provider of the OBSERVER*'s most thought provoking expense claims (double submissions, clothes on company credit, "lost" receipts, etc.), maintained that the laptop computer belonged to her, and not Lonrho (24th September). This is largely a question of semantics.*

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WITTS,
Financial Controller, The Observer, London SW8.

PS. I dispute that I "burbled" a reply; my response was an unequivocal "Fuck Off!"

Cut by a Remington

Sir,

I am surprised at the narrow conception of disability revealed in your 27th August 1993 issue.

Sadler's Wells was taken to task for being explicit in its recruitment literature about the difficulty of negotiating certain parts of a theatre built in the 1920s. This was held to be at odds with our stated policy of automatically interviewing all suitably qualified disabled people.

Wheelchair users — who, according to your article, "can be certain of getting an interview (and) equally certain of not getting the job" — in fact only constitute 3% of all disabled people. This means that there are still many disabled people who Sadler's Wells would be able to accommodate. I am sure that PRIVATE EYE *would be the first to accuse us of being economical with the truth if we were not honest about our shortcomings to those who, despite our best efforts, could not be so easily accommodated.*

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN REMINGTON,
Chief Executive, Sadler's Wells, London EC1.

Tender is the knight...

Sir,

Couch Potato is obviously the sort of chap who believes that foreplay is a waste of everyone's time and so bangs away for the Big O straight from the off.

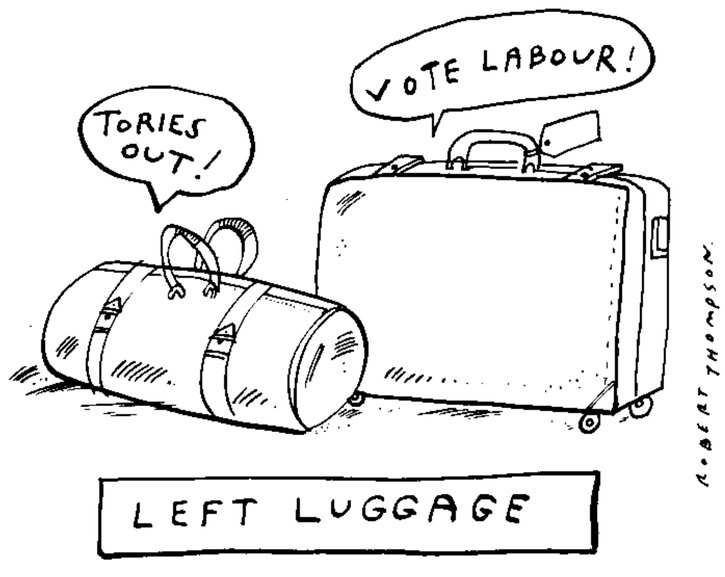
Chess, as amply demonstrated in our coverage of the Times World Chess Championship, does have its high-speed, wham-bam moments. But it also has its tender moments, its teases and little pleases, its pauses for enlightenment and to savour the moment. Unlike Couch Potato, we feel you need to have the whole experience to get the most satisfaction for all concerned.

As Couch Potato surmises, we are scurrying around at Channel 4. Not to deny the chess, but to figure out how to get the blinkered nay-sayers like Couch Potato to print the facts that dispute their prejudices.

The fact that the 8pm Times World Chess Championship show is the highest rated programme in that slot for Channel 4 this year. The fact that nearly one quarter of all adults in Britain tuned into the chess in week one. The fact that around two million viewers watch the chess each day on Channel 4.

A failure? Yes, a failure of the imagination on the part of Couch Potato. Perhaps he should re-examine his technique.

Yours,
MIKE MILLER,
Commissioning Editor, Sport, Channel 4, London W1.



Foodian slip

Sir,

*Your Hackwatch chronicle (*EYE *829) of Sir Clement Freud's tireless search for a good lunch recalls an incident in Carlisle in the 1970s.*

Freud had been invited for the day by the city's Liberal Association (whose prospective Parliamentary candidate I then was) and was due to speak in the evening at the Liberal Club in support of David Steel's bid for the leadership. His itinerary, which we sent for his approval well in advance, included lunch in Carlisle's poshest restaurant — which, mindful of his gourmet reputation, had prepared a special menu for the occasion.

Freud first objected to the table, which he said was too near the window, but failed to get another because all the others were occupied. A waitress then brought the menu, which he glanced at very briefly and thrust back. "I thought it was well known," he said, "that I never eat lunch. But you may all have yours, if you're hungry. I'll watch you."

Ever so gratefully, the rest of us did. The appalling Freud eventually settled for a bowl of fresh strawberries (which weren't on the menu) on the loudly-expressed grounds that it was one of the few dishes restaurants could be relied on not to ruin. He then entertained our fellow diners with a poem he'd composed on the subject of John Pardoe's hairpiece...

At least Michael Winner makes the odd watchable film...

Yours,
DAVID MILSTED,
Gillingham, Dorset.

Lookalike

Venables

Andino

Sir,

Alan Sugar had better hope that this is only a similarity. Compare Terry Venables to Chubby Andino, a New York gangster featured in last week's VILLAGE VOICE. *Alan had better be just a fad more careful in future, methinks.*

Yours sincerely,
TOM RIDGWAY,
London WC1.

Retch for the Sky

Sir,

I know Sky-bashing is a favourite EYE*-sport, but it's a bit rich to read in the edition dated September 24th "that in 1993 BSkyB does not even offer its viewers a subtitle service, on any programmes, on any channel" — when on September 23rd Sky launched its subtitling service on the movie channels with a special screening of "Father of the Bride".*

We will be subtitling at least 100 major new movies every year, building up a catalogue of several hundred movies as time progresses. The cost to Sky is hundreds of thousands of pounds: but having just reached profitability, we thought this the right time to offer the hearing-impaired the same chance as the rest of the population to enjoy recently-released movies.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ELSTEIN,
Head of Programming, Sky, Isleworth, Middx.

LUVVIES

There is a hooligan side of me that always wants to force the issue, to make things happen. I'm not sure how much the Royal Court really wants to change, and I'm certainly not sure that they've realised just how much it is going to change. I think I may be remembered as a kind of Gorbachev figure, someone who is brought in to open all the windows and let in some air; but once I've done that I'll probably be allowed to stay on for about a week, then I'll have to be bumped off. There may well be tears before bedtime. I don't think they will be mine.

STEPHEN DALDRY
(Royal Court artistic director)
Sunday Times

The two women had bonded in true American fashion even before Bassett actually got the role: "I walked in and met her and the first thing she said was 'She's beautiful'; I said, 'You're beautiful and fabulous', and we embraced."

The meeting of Tina Turner and Angela Bassett, who plays her in *What's Love Got To Do With It*
The Sunday Times Magazine

Submitted by: Steve Vallance, R.A. Pelling.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Jakobian tragedy

Sir,

I read with amusement your letter from Stephen Illegible and his renewed attack on Keith Best. I know of no Stephen Illegible of Fair Trials Abroad but I do know of Stephen Jakobi, Chairman of Fair Trials Abroad whose letters are frequently illegible and rarely literate.

It was this same man who concocted a campaign in London falsely claiming that the two girls Patricia Cahill and Karyn Smith were framed with heroin by the Thai police. These and associated claims were indeed racist and bigoted apart from being untrue. He even invented a policeman as claiming that the girls were innocent and framed by his colleagues. And why was this policeman saying this, we once asked Jakobi (on tape): "Because he was western educated, of course," he replied. I spoke to the policeman concerned but we had to converse in Thai. He could hardly speak English. He had never heard of Mr Jakobi.

To scorn Mr Jakobi is to invite great wrath. A British Embassy interpreter here who did so was described by him as having Alzheimer's disease and running a criminal racket in Bangkok extorting money for making pardon applications.

The Thai legal firm which represented Miss Smith were described as crooks and were not paid. And I myself was accused at a press conference in London (which I could not of course attend) of inventing an interview with Miss Smith in which she said that she could not possibly have been framed by the Thai police.

Yours sincerely,
ANDREW DRUMMOND,
Bangkok, Thailand.

Tales from the Videocrypt

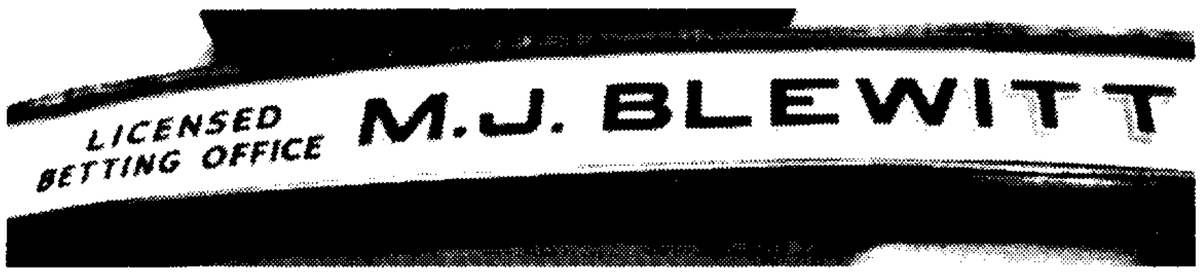
Sir,

Maybe your Media News correspondent should spend some time watching the TV or reading some of the more influential broadcasting newsletters. BBC Select uses a specially-engineered variant of the Videocrypt encryption standard, quaintly known as Videocrypt-S, and this was developed at expense by the BBC. Additionally, BBC Select has been effectively shut down, with around 29,000 of an ordered 30,000 decoder receivers still in the warehouse.

Yours faithfully,
DARREN INGRAM,
Editor, Satnews, Coventry.

I-SPY

Newport



Dartmouth

Maitland, NSW

Submitted by Alison & Guy Arnold, Paul Morris, E.A. Manthos. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Mass protest

Sir,

I usually find your Alternative Rocky Horror Service Book column amusing and thought-provoking as it often exposes a creeping error in religious circles.

But you go too far in EYE *829. Your mockery of the Communion Service is a sacrilege, poking fun as it does at the very heart of the Christian faith. This is not a matter for cheap, tasteless humour. It causes deep offence to the believing Christian and is unworthy even of a publication such as yours.*

Yours faithfully,
P.T. KEYMER,
Limpsfield, Surrey.

Acu-te observation

Sir,

First pedant writes again (Zzzzzzz...)

1. "Rem acu tetigisti" is a Latin tag used by several 19th and early 20th century English authors, including P.G. Wodehouse (in, I think, "Joy Cometh in the Morning"). It was misquoted in the EYE.

2. The phrase does not occur in Horace.

3. It presumably derives from Plautus's Rudens 5,2,17 ("tetigisti acu"), as the learned Emily Morris points out.

Something tells me, Mr Editor, that you will very shortly be closing this correspondence. Am I right?

PAUL FERGUSON,
St Helier, Jersey.

Roasted alive

Sir,

Since reading your issue of 27th August this year, containing the repulsive "Ted — I'm in the oven, Love Sylvia" "cartoon", I have made several attempts to get into my local newsagents and buy subsequent copies of PRIVATE EYE. *The nearest I've come is picking one up and, very quickly, putting it back again. Looks like you've lost another devoted reader. Congratulations. Nice going.*

Yours no longer,
GEOFF COLE,
Portswood, Southampton.

Eye spy

Sir,

Your tale in HP Sauce concerning my book "Seven Spies Who Changed The World" is a fabrication.

As you could have verified with ease, none of the editions contain the errors relating to the U-2 plane that you assert.

Yours faithfully,
RUPERT ALLASON.

Pets' corner

Sir,

No further correspondence about the gerbil please. It has suffered enough.

ALAN CRABTREE,
Isle of Man.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We always consider a point dropped at home as a point dropped."
WALTER SMITH, Scotsport
(Stuart Crawley)

"Because of the booking, I will miss the Holland game — if selected."
PAUL GASCOIGNE, Channel 4
(Bernard Hughes)

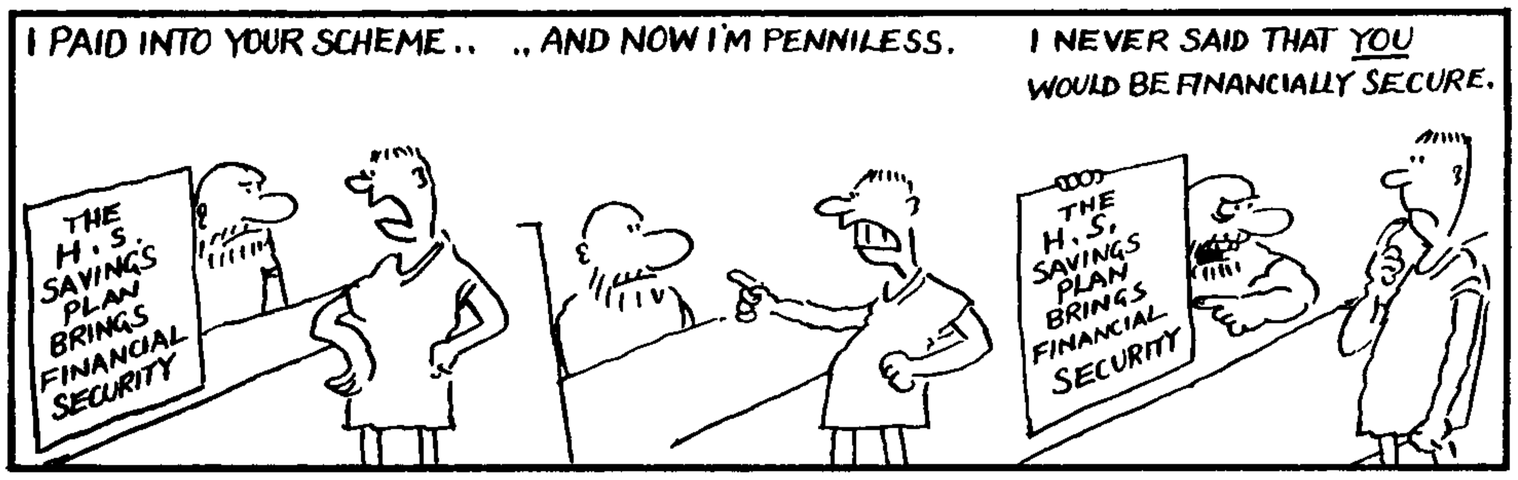
"A part of Jim Morrison refused to believe he was dead."
ROCK EXPERT, Radio 5
(David Ballantine)

Jonathan King: *"My new series goes out on Tuesday nights here on Radio One and it's called 'Music Music Music'."*
Simon Bates: *"What's it about?"*
(Paul Shilton)

"Has suicide become a way of life in British prisons?"
PETER GLANVILLE, Radio Norfolk
(Ms C. Smith)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN


I PAID INTO YOUR SCHEME.. .. AND NOW I'M PENNILESS.
I NEVER SAID THAT YOU WOULD BE FINANCIALLY SECURE.
THE H.S. SAVINGS PLAN BRINGS FINANCIAL SECURITY
THE H.S. SAVINGS PLAN BRINGS FINANCIAL SECURITY

Letter from **Phnom Penh**

from Our Own Correspondent

OVER the past few weeks Phnom Penh has become a meeting place for old friends.

The former "God king" Sihanouk returned to regain his crown in the presence of the much-heralded "Khmer Rouge defectors". One hundred "former Khmer Rouge", plus some fully accredited members, gathered for the ceremony.

There seems to be some discrepancy in figures quoted for Khmer Rouge defections — anything from a few hundred to 2,000. For the sceptics among us who question the apparent unveiling period of sweetness and light, in which the Khmer Rouge are set to fade from the scene as if part of a bad dream, the numbers are troubling.

There must be some people here whose UN career prospects would improve with the portrayal of just such a scenario — General John Sanderson, UNTAC military commander, and Yasushi Akashi, the UNTAC head of mission, readily spring to mind.

Luckily there are those on hand to convert dreams into reality: William Shawcross was also in town recently.

Shawcross, presently working for the Carnegie Institute in Washington, is set to do for UNTAC, and accompanying career diplomats, what he so successfully achieved for Rupert Murdoch: whitewash. Rounding on his own brethren at a recent meeting in Phnom Penh, Shawcross lamented: "Press coverage of UNTAC was deplorable and made me ashamed to be a journalist."

Shawcross went on to praise UNTAC's efforts to keep the Khmer Rouge "in the fold" rather than "attack them as General Loridon and several armchair journalists suggested". A rare exponent of truth economics, Shawcross omitted to mention the increased territory taken by the Khmer Rouge over the past 18 months and the fact that a much healthier and more virulent force now stands ready to confront the newly constituted government should it not capitulate to demands for power sharing.

Shawcross remains vitriolic toward the present State of Cambodia regime of Hun Sen, continuing to assimilate their crimes with those of Pol Pot and co. Vietnam also continues to be castigated for turning liberation into an "unsupportable occupation" of this country.

So as UNTAC, and accompanying apologists leave, what is there to show for 18 months and $2.8 billion?

Well, in addition to a strengthened Khmer Rouge in the field there are still more than eight million mines on the land (UNTAC considerately returned the mines they had confiscated during their stay), rendering 50 percent of the agricultural land unusable.

More than 120,000 people are internally displaced and flooding on to mined land and into urban areas as the supply of food from the World Food Programme runs out. An environmental catastrophe continues, with logs and gemstones still heading out across Cambodia's various borders. But there were successes — that election, of course...

Still to come for Cambodia are the World Bank and IMF, together with assorted bilateral (asset stripping) donors.

O.B.N.

How is it possible for a woman to look just as beautiful at 60 as she did at 20? Is it fair that intelligence, wit, beauty, charisma, charm, physical perfection, talent, money and success should all inhabit or be generated from one body?

Joan Collins has all these things. She is a physical manifestation of all these things. She is a phenomenon. She might even be a miracle. I met her last week for the first time and could not even articulate a sentence in her presence.

She is every bit as extraordinary as you secretly hope she isn't.

JACI STEPHEN
Today

Submitted by Norman Schwenk.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

o "Beware. A gang of charlatans has been at work in our city boasting that they possess the ancient secret of penis enlargement," said Dr Thongchai Termprasith to the press, after more than a hundred Thai men had reported to Chiang Mai's Maharaj Hospital with severe genital disorders, within the space of a few days.

"Those men are nothing more than quacks and the results of their handiwork are woeful to behold. They charge 500 Baht, and use a knitting needle to inject the member with their 'magic potion', which turns out

to be a mixture of olive oil, chalk, kapok and other rubbish. I've even seen bits of the Bangkok telephone directory. Naturally, the penis swells up to the size of a loofah, which is when money is handed over. But after a few days a most terrible thing happens. The men start to experience a dreadful burning after intercourse, and soon their manhood turns rotten and implodes. I myself have amputated more than twenty this week."

One victim, who wished to remain anonymous, told the press: "Learn from my misfortunes. I am bereft. Last week I thought twelve centimetres was not enough to satisfy my wife. How will I pleasure her with no centimetres?"

"Be happy with the Natural One that God has given you," Dr Thongchai told reporters, "and remember that a healthy maggot is better by far than a gangrenous king cobra." *(Bangkok Post, 12/7/93. Spotter — M.J. Humphries)*

— o —

o "These bishops are crooks. They are stupid dogs and we will piss in their eyes and swallow them," Mrs Cecilia Kankodo, chairman of the Christian Women's League told a Malawi conference on religion.

Two Catholic bishops, Chisendera and Chimole, were accused by several delegates of corruption, promiscuity and theft of pocket calculators. Mrs Hilda Manjamkbosi said: "Who does Chimole think he is? He has a face like chiboli, the ugly insect that lives underground. We will piss on his head — excuse me for my language, but I am very angry — yes, we will piss on his head. Women can piss too, if you didn't know that, and we will show him. We will shit on his head. Yes, we can take off our clothes and piss and shit on him. It is not our intention to be swearing like this, but we are very angry. God be praised."

As Chairman Dezde shouted "order", Manjamkbosi smashed a chair over the head of a television cameraman and screamed: "You photo me badly. May you have fish in your stomach for six hours and suffer illness of the bowels." The sitting was temporarily suspended.

When the conference eventually reconvened, it voted by a narrow margin in favour of urinating in the eyes of both bishops, while the Hon. Katola Phiri suggested that they should be invited to the conference and killed. *(The Malawi Nation, 20/9/93. Spotter — A.J. Hawken)*

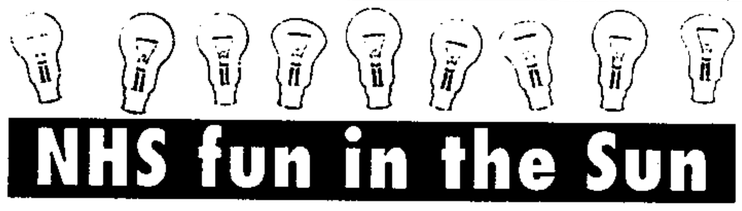
Compiled by
Victor Lewis-Smith

— o —

o *"When I saw what vile things he was doing to the chicken, I became like a man possessed. It was her honour I was protecting, your honour," Ibrahim Alkan told a Turkish court.*

Alkan, a 30-year-old poultry breeder from Antalya, had discovered his neighbour, 80-year-old Hasan Ank, in the act of raping his favourite chicken. "It was a vile sight to behold," Alkan explained, "and he was even doing it in front of her baby chicks. I broke his head with a bottle but he did not stop, so I stabbed him sixty-five times with a knife I keep beside me for husking millet."

Ank left the courtroom screaming the native proverb "He who knows the female hare, the hen or the tame pigeon, God bring him no absinthium" and was taken into custody. The chicken was sent to the provincial veterinarian directorate, and detained for further treatment. (Turkish Daily News, 6/8/93. Spotter — I.A. Neill)



NHS fun in the Sun

Q: How many drinks does it take for a Sun journalist to come up with some old jokes about lightbulbs?

A: 27. Six double scotches, eight pints of lager, bottle of red wine, Bacardi and Diet Coke, three Tia Marias, and an Irish coffee. Then someone else goes out to Smith's and buys the *Lightbulb Joke Book*.

THOMAS
THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Hire prices

"WHAT do they think we are? Taxis?" spluttered Thomas. "Anyway, it's too dangerous these days to ply for hire. You never know who'll pick you up."

"Like it or not," said Gordon the Virgin Engine, "we're all being sold to three different private companies, so they can lease us back to the Fat Controller."

"What a pointless exercise!"

"No, Thomas. There's money to be made here. Now, when the Fat controller comes to settle the lease you must insist on a very high fee, like all the rest of us."

"No way. The Fat Controller's already making a loss, you know."

"Listen, Thomas. The only way our new owners will make a massive profit is through us all insisting on high rental fees."

"But then we'd be operating a cartel!"

"Don't be silly. We're engines, not drugs dealers." Gordon cast a glance around the yard, then lowered his voice. "And before you start feeling sorry for the Fat Controller, let me tell you he doesn't think much of you."

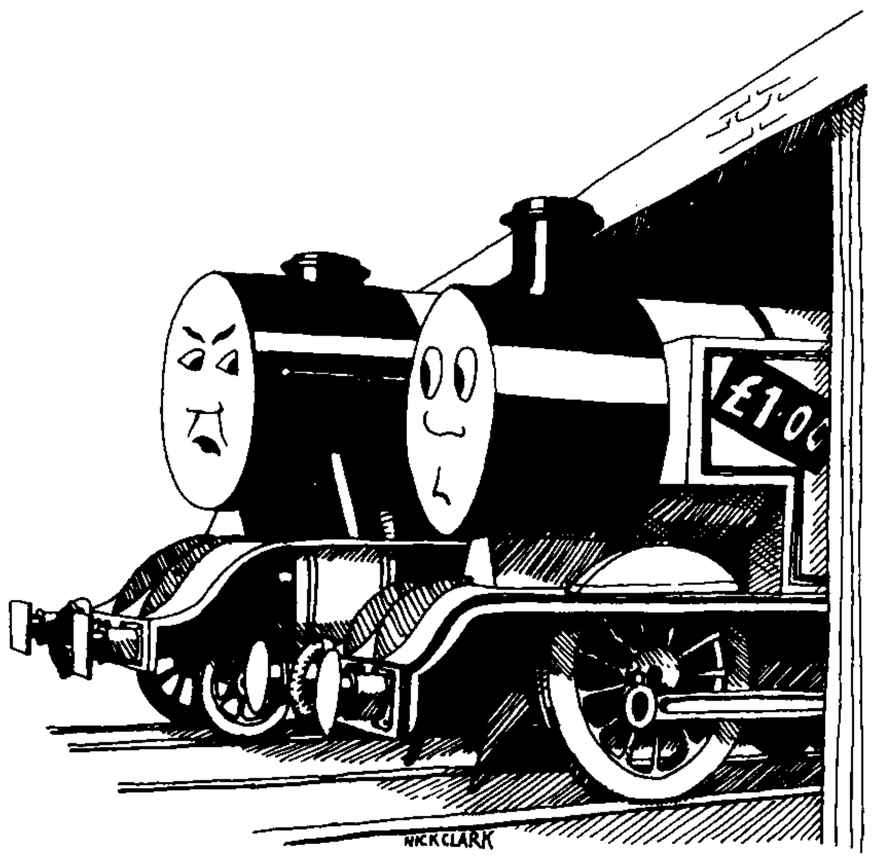
"Rubbish! He told me I was his trusty steed."

"He's selling you for one pound."

"COME off it, Thomas. That's way above the market price," said the Fat Controller. "You can't charge those fees if you're 40 years old."

"You told me once that I was your trusty steed."

"That was 25 years ago, when I was trying to help you over your mid-life crisis. Now you've got varicose valve gear and a bronchial boiler."



But Thomas stuck to his guns.

"Very well. You'll regret this, Thomas. I'II get Gordon to pull the train instead, for half the price you're asking."

Thomas began to have misgivings once the Fat Controller left the engine shed. Perhaps this was another of Gordon's dirty tricks. He need not have worried, however, because the Fat Controller eventually returned with his tie aslant and beads of sweat over his face.

"It seems I don't have any choice," he quivered.

Thomas began to feel sorry for him, but then remembered the one pound.

"I'll have to pay that ridiculous fee for you." Then the Fat Controller marched off to his office, to draft a notice of immediate fare increases.

Chester Square SW1

Dear Bill,

Forgive the hiatus in our otherwise regular epistolary chinwag. (Talking of which I hear that Maurice was rushed into the Barbara Cartland Hernia Centre last week to be stitched up again after a blow-out on the M23.) But we have all been very preoccupied with the count-down to Blast Off on M's Book.

As I think I told you, the Memoirs have been written by a team of ghost historians, headed by the Great Imbiber himself, Professor "Boozer" Stone, and for the last few weeks we have been in Gstaad, talking sales strategy, courtesy of an oily little Greek fellow called Latsis or some such name who rents out floating gin-palaces and alpine love-nests to those who could well afford to pay for them themselves. What Latsis' game is I haven't yet quite rumbled. I think he may have his eye on a peerage, emboldened by that little fiddler Johnny – Moynihan, Menuhin? no matter – who got onto the latest list, and who also may be seen toddling about among the Edelweiss here in the company of his over-talkative wife.

I don't know if you've ever been to Switzerland, Bill, but it is a land of largely teetotal workaholics of unsmiling demeanour who for some reason hold the Old Girl in high esteem. Alpenhorns are blown in her honour whenever she ventures out to window-shop among the watchmakers and chocolatiers, and yodelling admirers dog her steps.

The book itself, which M has hitherto not deigned to peruse, is being kept strictly under wraps with a twenty-four hour round-the-clock Alsatian guard from Group Four minding the warehouse where twenty thousand virgin copies are stacked in heaps wrapped in cellophane, like hard-core porn. Nonetheless, the woman in charge of publicity, Hepzibah Dayglo, a frightful harpie from New York who I think I may have mentioned before, had the bright idea of a "sneak preview" signing at Boggis and Rushton in Hemel Hempstead, to "test the water". Posters were therefore put up late at night by hit squads of skinheads on motorbikes, and a quarter-page display advertisement was taken at short notice in the Hempstead Bee announcing a personal appearance by the Boss, "Order Your Copies Now".

Picture our feelings, after negotiating the M25 with Ms Dayglo cursing at the wheel, to pull up outside the emporium shortly before lunch to find the window filled with copies of Jeffrey Archer's latest masterpiece, complete with life-size photographic cutout of the smiling author in a Father Christmas hat alerting the attention of the passer-by to his work.

Mr Boggis, a youngish chancer with leather patches at the elbows and an unattractive snigger, invited us to step into the storeroom at the back of the shop for a cup of coffee and a sandwich as the signing table wasn't quite ready. I have rarely been so depressed. One large bottle of supermarket plonk (unopened), otherwise not a snifter in sight. Enter Horace Rushton, an old bird in a hairy tweed jacket and obsequious manner, who welcomes us to his booklined slum. "Ah, Lady Thatcher, we are indeed honoured. Of course we cannot hope to repeat the success of Mr Heath. They were queuing all round the block, I remember, the police had to send reinforcements to hold back well-wishers, but I am sure any minute –" he consulted a hairy wrist – "the flood-gates will open. Perhaps we should go through now. If you would follow me."

A table erected in the Humour Department in the back part of the shop was already groaning under a pile of books, with a poster pinned to the front of the table. Margaret sat down and took out her fountain pen, a Mont Blanc of torpedo proportions, a present from our oily friend Mr Latsis.

Half an hour passed, and there was no sign of the book-hungry multitudes. At last a child approached her. "Excuse me, Miss, Mum says have you got anything about Flower-Drying and Macrame?" Our host meanwhile, thinking that I might detract from the dignity of the occasion, led me into the Bargain Department, suggesting that I might like to accept with his compliments a remaindered copy of Clement Freud's Book of Party Drinks.

When I returned I was relieved to see a little old lady advancing bright-eyed on the Boss holding a book. "It's not for me. Could you put 'To Ron and Amy. Haven't forgotten lovely w/e Clacton 1973 Love Mrs Thatcher'? Thank you." The Boss duly obliged, but flicking the book shut, underwent a remarkable change of mood when she espied on the cover the grinning face of her former Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker. "Ah, yes," interposed Mr Boggis, "that one is shifting very nicely. You could say it is walking out of the shop." "You certainly could," remarked Margaret, "and so am I!"

Back at Chester Square, I was glad to hear that Margaret's Ansafone was crammed with a mass of urgent messages which to some extent appeased her displeasure. A call from the Sunday Telegraph asking if she would "put the boot in to coincide with Major's Keynote Speech", an anonymous voice claiming to be Sir Richard Body, offering himself as a sacrificial stalking horse if she would only give the word, little Portillo wanting to know if Der Tag was nigh (make of it what you will) and a barely intelligible Cockney voice from the Isle of Dogs offering her an electoral pact with the British National Party.

Talking of the BNP, according to my MI5 chum Gascoigne-Pees, the Major is one of their biggest fund-raisers, and is thinking of standing on the Fascist Ticket for Mid-Glamorgan. A lot of his info is pretty cock-eyed, so this may not be true. But you might make discreet enquiries when you next see him at the Club as I would not be entirely averse to some part time activity on those lines myself.

I now have to pack my bags for Blackpool – a dump I hoped never to clap eyes on again. But in the interests of book-promotion we have been told to keep a high profile and open as many jumble sales as possible. (Incidentally, don't be misled by the Boss's pledges of loyalty to little Major. The thinking is that Fatty Clarke has to be held at bay until the time is ripe for Generalissimo Portillo to seize power.)

Yours in the soup (electric),

Denis

GLENDA SLAGG

FLEET STREET'S AGEIN' BABE!?! (surely 'Asian Babe'? Ed.)

PRINCESS Di — what a larf?! offering her The Dimbleby Lecture. I ask you?! If Miss No 'O' Levels were to get anywhere near the podium, it would be The Really Dim-bleby Lecture (Geddit?). The next thing they'll be givin' her the Pulitzer Prize?! And what for?! Wearin' low-cut gowns and flashin' her pins at oldie cowboy Clint?!!? Go on, Di, make my day and scraaam Ma'am!?! (Geddit?).

JUST who do the dreary suits on the BBC — British Borecasting Clowns to you Mister!? (Is this strong enough, Mr Murdoch, Sir?!?) — think they are?! Snubbin' lovely Lady Di and stoppin' her give us all a Dimbleby lecture on safe sex and family values!? Why shouldn't she, for cryin' out loud?!! She's a lot more fun than some dull old Don a-groanin' and a-dronin' about the o-zzz-one layer?!! (Geddit?) And she looks great too in her low-cut dresses and short skirts!?! Take a tip from Clint, Mr so-called Birt, and give our Di a break!?! Otherwise you'll be unforgiven and you'll get a fistful of Glenda!?! *(That's enough Film Titles, Ed.)*

PRINCE Charles — what a bloomin' nerve!? Giving the thumbs down to his cousin's Happy Day!?! Jus cos your own marriage has gone down the tubes, why make little Linley and his lovely lady suffer?!?! Pack it in Mr Misery!?! You stay at home and chat to your clematis — we don't care!?! We'll all be watching lovely Lady Di with her low-cut dresses (You've done her. Ed.).

SPARE a thought for Britain's Boxin' Bruiser!?! Frank Bruno, I'm talkin' about, stoopid!?! Didn't your heart go out to the big guy in round seven when he came a cropper in Cardiff on Sky TV?! (OK, Mr Murdoch, sir?) Boo hoo hoo hoo, give us a Kleenex, Frank!?!!

FRANK Bruno – arenchasick-ofhim?!? He couldn't box his way out of a Kleenex tissue?!! Stick to Panto, Frank!?! You're useless!?!!? All together now, Kiddies: "Oh, yes, you are!". Bruno: "Oh, yes, I am". (Shome mishtake shurely? Ed.)

HERE they are, Glenda's Fabulous Fall Fatties!?

● **ROBBIE COLTRANE** — He's a Cracker and no mistake!? Talk about Tutti Frutti!? I'd like to see you in a real comic strip!?! Geddit?!

● **LUCIANO PAVAROTTI** — Opera's Mr Big!?! How about a duet with La Fabuloso Slaggini?! Geddit?! They'll be nessum dorma round my place when we hit the high notes!?!?!

● **LORD GOODMAN** — He may be eighty but he can still manage two dinners any day! Come on over, Fatso, and show us your affidavit!?!

Byeeee!

ART NEWS

NATION TO LOSE 'THREE DISGRACES'

by Our Art Correspondent
Brian R. Sewell

THE famous "Three Disgraces" by Casanova are to be shipped out of the country by public demand.

The group consists of three nude figures representing Koo Stark, Princess Diana and Fergie.

Said one expert: "It is a tragedy that these exquisite creatures should be lost to the nation. They represent in their own way all that is ghastly about Britain today".

But last night there were last-ditch hopes to save the Disgraces. "They are incredibly expensive", said one admirer, a Mr A.N. Wilson of London, "but they do embody something quintessentially English."

Camilla Parker-Bowles is 57.

Waldegrave for St Cakes?

by Our Education Staff
Quentin Lettsfloatthisone

THERE was speculation in academic circles that Mr William Waldegrave could well become the next Lictor of the £3,000-a-term public school of St Cakes.

Although not himself an old Cakeian, Mr Waldegrave's high profile in government and experience of Charter Management would make him an ideal candidate.

"He's also about to lose his job," said St Cakes Governor, the Reverend C.J.P. Litton-Barkworth, a former chaplain at the prestigious boarding school.

"Waldie is a dear, dear friend and we can't have chaps like him signing on at the local DHSS just because they got caught with their pants down at the Scott Enquiry. Anyway, his wife makes very good cakes, which is an example of what Jung would call 'meaningful synchronicity'."

Rev. Litton-Barkworth O.C. (Kipling's '32-'36) is 86.

LUZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
CUT-BACKS: A SOAP-LESS OPERA
SHITE! IT'S THE GREAT UNWASHED!
YA SCROUNGIN' BASTAADS! BUY YER UURN LIKE WE DO!
PONG!
MORE FREEBIES FOR MUTHA
LET THEM DRINK DREGS!
AN' THERE'LL BE NA MOOR A THESE MINIATURES FOR 'EM NEITHA!
AH DIVVENT BOTHA WI' NO LITTL'UNS, ME!
GLUG!
"HEIR"? I THOUGHT IT WAS ABOOT BLIDDY HIPPIES PONCIN' ABOOT LIKE STUPID TARTS!!!
AYE! IT'S A BORIN' REVIVAL OF SUMMAT THAT MEKS NO SENSE!
DAVEL+TRAVIS DIMBLEBY TO FILM "HEIR"
AT LAST! AH'M GONNA TEK CENTRE STAGE AN' REVEAL AAL!
SNIFFA'S A FRIGID BINT AN' AH'M A REET NICE BLUURK WHAT LOVES BAIRNS, GORRIT??
YES SIR YOUR EMINENCE! SLURP LICK!
BUCK HICE
TOURISTS - BUCK OFF!
BASTAADS!! AH WANTED TA GIVE THE DIMBLEBY LECTURE!

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

These are indeed historic times! Today in my lunch hour I had to go to Ryman's to buy another notebook, to go with my "Loonies", "Bastards" and *"Devils" books*, making four in all. This one is called my "Apples Short of a Picnic" book, after a brilliant phrase I came up with in Japan, or was it Manchester? No, I tell a lie, it was Malaya, a country I shall not be going back to again. Oh no. In fact, it is the first country to get into the "Bastards" book (under 'M', which includes several other 'M's I don't mention!). This was the country where the prime minister insulted me in his speech of welcome by saying I had done nothing about Bosnia. Of course I did something about Bosnia. I took Mr Hurd's advice, which was to do nothing. Which is obviously something in my book! (Not my "Apples Short of a Picnic" book of course, but another one, which I must remember to go to Ryman's tomorrow to purchase!) And besides, what had the Malayans done about Bosnia, I should like to know? When I was in Bosnia last year there were several Malayans short of a picnic, I can tell you!

Tuesday

Today at breakfast, which was Semi-Skimmed Apple Juice plus Sainsbury's Picnic-style Muesli, my wife Norman asked me: "John, what do you mean when you keep saying someone 'is a few apples short of a picnic'?" I explained to her in my special humorous voice (which I have been practising for the jokes in my very important conference speech next week): "Surely it is obvious. People who criticise me are like someone who goes on a picnic but forgets to take enough apples."

She replied, somewhat unnecessarily in my judgement: "In that case you should say that it is the *picnic* which is short of *apples*." Sometimes I think it is true that women have no sense of humour, except of course Mrs Bottomley who always laughs at my jokes in our cabinet meetings.

Wednesday

I am becoming a famous journalist as well as being prime minister! Following my brilliant column in the News of the World, Mr O'Donnell tells me I have written an article in the Economist which everyone is talking about! I read it with great interest, and agreed with all of it, except the bits about Europe, which I thought were a bit negative. I was proved right, as usual, when Mr Delors appeared on television at lunchtime saying that I was "yesterday's man". I have immediately sent a not inconsiderably stern reply to Mr Delors which goes as follows:

Chers M. Delors,

Comment ça va? Je ne suis pas l'homme de hier. Je suis l'homme d'aujour d'hui et l'homme du future, en mon jugement. Oh oui. C'est vous, monsieur, qui est l'homme d'hier.

Votre sincerement,

Jean Majeur.

P.S. Votre nom est maintenant en toutes mes livres, i.e. la livre de "Bâtardes", de "Loonies", de "Diables", et meme le "Plusieurs de pommes bref d'un picnique" livre. Prenez garde.

This letter which Miss Hogg helped me with, because she got French 'O' level, should certainly put Mr Delors in his place. He is just a faceless bureaucrat with glasses and no ideas, in my judgement. How he has got to the top I cannot imagine.

Thursday

Mr Smith has made a very poor showing at his Party conference. It is sad to see a leader who is so unpopular that even his closest colleagues, like his Number Two, Mrs Beckett, will not support him publicly. It would be rather like my own Number Two Mr Clarke going round saying that my government was in a terrible hole. Mr Smith's big speech was a complete flop. The only thing anybody enjoyed was all the silly jokes he made about me.

It was just the same with Mr Ashdown, who read out a silly poem about how I "wasn't there". Of course I wasn't there. I had gone to Tokyo. Mr Ashdown is clearly two party conferences short of an apple! As I said to the Cabinet: "It is all very easy to make fun of me just to get a few cheap laughs." They all agreed, which shows that there are no splits in our Party, oh no!

My speech next week is going to be the most important of my career, Mr O'Donnell tells me. I have told my Chief Speech Writer, Mr Norris Norris, that my main theme should be the need for more toilets on the M25. "But, prime minister, we did that last year," he said. "I know," I told him, "and it was a great success. That is why I must do it again."

I also suggested some jokes about Mr Smith, viz. that he must be "a few bananas short of an orange, and the Labour Party itself is short of a leader". Mr Norris was clearly very amused, but said that he would have to "give them a bit of a spin" before they could be used. He also had another idea. "Why don't you try a few jokes about yourself, prime minister? It worked brilliantly for Smith and Ashdown. It would also show that you can take a joke." Tonight another name has gone into my book under 'M'.

Friday

I stayed up nearly all night working on my historic conference speech. I am writing it myself, since you cannot trust anyone nowadays, not even Miss Hogg and Mr O'Donnell, who are very near to being put in several of my books. So far the speech, which is all my own work, reads:

"Ladies and gentlemen. John Smith is a bastard."

This evening I will do some more work on it.

Saturday

Mr Clarke tells me, on the television, that he is planning very savage cuts indeed to deal with government spending. "There are faceless men sitting at Government desks fiddling with their biros and writing rubbish in their notebooks. They are in for a shock."

This is very good indeed. I rang up Mr Clarke to congratulate him. "Yes," he said, "no one is safe. After the conference there will be blood on the carpet." Perhaps he is my friend after all.

Sunday

Believe it or not, someone else might be becoming my friend after all! The woman I never mention may have to be crossed out of my books.

She has announced that she is coming to the Conference to make it clear she supports me! I told the Cabinet this excellent news before we got in the Group 4 coach to the Conference in Bournemouth which Sir Norma's old friends had kindly laid on. I told them Mrs Thatcher wants to change the rules about the Conservative leadership — "so some idiot can't get in by mistake". My colleagues all laughed. "And, what's more," I said, "she has agreed to raise funds for the Party at fetes and the like."

"Perhaps she could run the White Elephant stall," said Mr Waldegrave, who has taken to wearing a gown and mortarboard in meetings. "Or is that *your* department?" Everyone laughed again. We are certainly in high spirits for the Conference. Oh yes.

THAT PRESCOTT BOMBSHELL SPEECH IN FULL

by Our Labour Conference Staff **Lunchtime O'Mov**

"Brothers, sisters, comrades... great movement of ours... turning point... new dawn... forging links... hand in hand... fight and fight again... toilers by hand and by brain... Nye Bevan... grapefruit segments... bloody hell... come off it... Tory press... support John Smith... way forward... this great movement of ours... leopardskin accessories... vote for John Smith... mine's a Newcastle Brown *(standing ovation lasts several hours)*."

ON OTHER PAGES

Oratory Is Not Dead by Paul Johnson *6* Paul Johnson Is Dead Boring by Everyone Else *7* **Unfunny Omov Cartoon by Garland** *18*

TV

'BRIGHTON BORES' TO BE AXED

by Our Media Correspondent **Jane Thynne-Stuff**

THE SITUATION comedy based on ageing bores in the Trade Union movement was today cancelled by new controller John Smith.

The premise of a group of elderly has-beens congregating in Brighton "simply didn't work" he said. "Characters like Bill, John, Jimmy and Rodney, whilst amusing in theory, had gone way beyond a joke. The public didn't like them and we can't afford to lose any more ratings."

In place of *Brighton Bores* a new comedy series is being hastily put together by the management called *Alas Smith and John (Prescott)*.

"Now this one *is* a winner," said Mr Smith. "It's got all the right ingredients and no left ones at all."

A Doctor writes

AS A Doctor I am often asked: "Doctor, given that you're responsible for wrongly administering chemotherapy to thousands of patients, how come you've still got your job?"

Well, the simple answer is that when a doctor is in trouble his problems are cured by other doctors using a treatment known as "Closing Ranks" or *Whitewashus Professionalis Normalis*, to give it the full medical name.

What happens with this treatment is that the doctor after a short period of time experiences no side effects such as loss of job or income, and soon begins to get well off again. The patients, on the other hand, feel extremely sick and irritable indeed.

If you are worried about feeling ill do NOT seek professional medical advice.

© *A. Doctor*

IN THE COURTS

The Judicial Inquiry held by Mr Justice Scottlecarrot into the Iraqgate Affair

Day 94: The evidence of the Rt Dishonourable Mr David Mellor DJ, CD, NBG.

Miss Presley Emmerdale-Farm QC: Mr Mellor, I put it to you that you were a Minister of State in the Foreign Office in 1987.

Mellor: Yes, but I was far too senior to know what was going on.

Miss Elvis Presley: So you didn't know what was going on?

Mellor: I didn't say that. I knew exactly what was going on. I *am* a QC, you know, don't try any of your clever tricks with me.

Mr Justice Scottlecarrot: Kindly answer the question, please.

Mellor: I've forgotten what it was. I expect it was something pathetic about selling arms to Iraq.

Miss Drusilla Wensleydale: I put it to you again, Mr Mellor, that...

Mellor: Oh, for goodness sake, I'm a busy man. I've got an opera phone-in on Radio Haywards Heath in half an hour, and a piece to write for the *Guardian* on what it's like to be on an opera phone-in in Haywards Heath.

Miss Prunella Lymeswold: Mr Mellor, this is a serious business.

Mellor: Has anyone told you you're beautiful when you're angry? What are you doing after the hearing?

Mr Justice Scottlecarrot: Call Mr Waldegrave.

(Enter worried-looking man)

Waldegrave: Look, I've got it now. I've had many sleepless nights on this one, and I've worked out what to say. *(Pulls out piece of paper)* There was no change in our policy on selling arms to Iraq. If there had been a change, I would have announced it. And since I didn't announce it, there cannot have been a change. It is true that we changed the policy. But it was only a very slight change. One minute we said we wouldn't sell them arms. The next we said we would sell them arms.

Scottlecarrot: But surely, Mr Waldegrave, that is scarcely a small change?

Waldegrave: No, because if it had been a major change, I would have announced it.

Scottlecarrot: Then why didn't you announce it?

Waldenowingravetrouble: Because there would have been a huge row because it was such a major change.

Scottlecarrot: Mr Waldegrave, could you tell me how many apples there are in a picnic?

Waldegrave: I am innocent.

The hearing continues

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (16)

A COSY DOG BASKET

The Daily Hellograph

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1993

Huge Shake-Up At Radio One

The 'Night of the Long Waves'

By Our Home Affairs Staff
D.J. TAYLOR, D.J. ENRIGHT AND D.J. THRIBB

BY FAR the most important event yesterday, our marketing department informs us, was the extraordinary announcement that Simon Beard, 58, and Alan Hairpiece, 61, are to be replaced as presenters of Radio One's prestigious shows, *Good Morning Pop Pickers* and *Good Afternoon Pop Pickers*.

This follows the shock "on air" resignation of Dave Tee Shirt, 74, the presenter of the popular late-night programme, *Good Evening Pop Pickers*.

The exit of BBC One's "top three" represents the biggest earthquake in British broadcasting since Lord Reith stepped down in 1846.

Zimmer Holiday

The new controller of Radio One is to be 21-year-old Gary Pimple, who first sprang to fame today when he emerged from obscurity to become Controller of Radio One.

Pimple is determined to stop the steady decline in Radio One's audiences which has been continuous since 1967.

He says: "Radio One is the jewel in our flagship. We will not allow it to be eroded by the likes of Richard Branson's Radio Mates FM and Radio Haywards Heath."

How It Will Look — Radio One's New Line-Up

7-10am Steve Zitt, 15, with The New Big Toast Breakfast Show.

10am-3pm Zena Glitter, 27, presents The Best of Zangra, Techno and Dub Bubble.

3-4pm The Marty Smartie Laugh Hour, featuring TV's Marty Smartie.

4-7pm David Mellor presents some of his favourite hits on CD.

7pm-Midnight John Peel, 76, presents the No One's Listening Show.

Close Down.

Report and picture — P14

Miss Koo Stark To Marry Another Man

By Our Court and Social Correspondent QUENTIN LETCH

THE society photographer Miss Kooala ("Koo") Stark is to marry again, it was announced today.

Miss Stark, 27, was formerly linked with a number of libel actions (*shurely 'men including HRH the Duke of York'? M.H.*)

Max most popular boy's name

By Our News Staff
LUNCHTIME O'B.N.

THE SECOND most important event of yesterday, according to our editor, was the annual survey of boy's names, showing that Max is the most popular name given to children by members of the *Daily Hellograph* staff.

THAT LIST IN FULL

Max	14
Conrad	12
Barbara	3
W.F.	2
TV's Charles	1

Peregrine, once the most popular name, this year dropped out of the list altogether for the first time.

ON OTHER PAGES ☐Leader — Whither Popular Radio? 18 ☐W.F. Deedes — Has It All Gone Too Far? 19 ☐Paul Johnson — Why Oh Why Can't They Bring Back Jimmy Savile? 18

Advertisement

Are You Young, Female and Talentless?

Then you could be a top *Hellograph* columnist, earning thousands of pounds a week. Simply complete the following sentences with a column of not more than 800 words, and we will print it:

1. "Who says grunge is dead? ..."

2. "My flatmates at Oxford had never heard of safe sex. And now..."

3. "Why do people think that Lovejoy is sexy?..."

4. "The Bundesbank should lower hemlines..." (shurely 'interest rates'? M.H. 'No' — Marketing Dept.)

I am under 18 and my famous father is . . . . . .

Send to The Editor, Marketing Dept., Daily Hellograph, Canary Wharf, London.

New-Look Easy To Solve Hellograph Crossword Puzzle

(set by our Marketing Department)

Across

1. Mad anon (anagram).

Prize: 2 tickets to Madonna concert.

LATE NEWS

Fascist Wins At Isle of Dogs

Mr Conrad Blackshirt, 56, today romped home in the *Daily Hellograph* "Most Popular Proprietor" competition. "I am not a fascist — I am Napoleon," he told waiting psychiatrists.

MR TONY BENN An Apology

Over the past 30 years we, in common with all other Tory newspapers, may have suggested that Mr Tony Benn was in some way a wild left-wing lunatic who was a danger to his country and should never be allowed to come to power. Headlines such as "Time To Send Tony To The Loony-Benn", "Red Benn On Gadaffi Payroll?" and "Stalin Was Right Says Bonkers Benn" may have given the impression that the Labour Party would be well rid of Mr Benn, and that his presence on the National Executive was the main argument against a Labour Government ever being allowed into office again.

We now realise that the above was the exact opposite of the truth, and that Mr Benn was in fact a wise and respected statesman whose like we shall never see again. We further accept that his departure from the National Executive deprives the Labour Party of its greatest remaining asset, and robs the Party of principle, conviction, vision and ideas. It leaves the Labour Party totally unfit to govern because it is too right-wing. Vote Conservative.

Yes! It's 20th Century American Art at the Royal Academy Rhyming Slang

Edward Hopper	**Show stopper**
Man Ray	**Seen enough today**
Willem de Kooning	**Pseuds are swooning**
Frank Stella	**Forget it, fella**
Ellsworth Kelly	**One for George Melly**
Jasper Johns	**More cons**
Jeff Koons	**King of the loons**
Liechtenstein	**The bubble's fine**
Rothko	**Time to go**
Jackson Pollock	**This stuff's not very good**

(That's enough slang. Ed)

BOLD EXPERIMENT FAILS

by Our Scientific Correspondent
Frank Boffin

AFTER TWO years living in a totally artificial environment, the human guinea pigs have emerged to describe their futuristic experiment.

Totally detached from reality, the volunteers had survived for two years having no contact at all with the outside world and existing in an unnatural self-sufficient atmosphere.

Leader of the project, John Major, said as he blinked at reporters: "It proves that we can survive for two years which a lot of people thought was impossible. We've existed purely by eating our own words and carefully recycling all the Labour Party's policies. It's been a terrific success."

Biasphere

Experts, however, disagreed. Said one: "They've failed to produce any green shoots, their ideas have got woefully thin and they've all got sick of each other."

He concluded: "This scheme doesn't work and the participants should be sent to Mars for 50 years to continue with it."

At The Ringside with Harry Carpenter-Ruck

Bruno v Lewis

in Ring 13

Referee *(Mr Justice Cocklecarrot)*: Now, lads, I want a good clean action with plenty of money for the lawyers of both sides. Fight on…

(Ding! Ding! Round One)

Commentator: And it's Lewis who comes out of his corner with a mean look in his eye… and he calls Bruno an 'Uncle Tom'. And there's no doubt that that's a real libel. He's landed a straight defamation there. And Bruno is reeling. He's hurt. He's definitely hurt. His reputation is damaged. We can see the damage. And he's gone back to his corner to consult his lawyers. There's Carter-Ruck… no one knows more about this game than the man they call Carter-Fuck.

(Ding! Ding! Round Two)

Referee: Lawyers out.

Commentator: And here comes Bruno now… and, oh my goodness, he's hit Lewis with a writ! It's a big one. A real heavyweight punch, a High Court writ, he didn't expect that one. He's down and he's taking the count.

Referee: ONE million… TWO million… THREE million… FOUR million…

Commentator: He's not moving. Oh, and it's all over. They've settled. And here's the winner, Carter-Ruck, holding out the notes to show the crowd. Another triumph for this 89-year-old veteran, whose famous catchphrase we'll never forget: "Float like a butterfly, sting everyone for as much money as they've got."

SOCCER

Turkish challenge

■ TURKISH champions Galatasaray play Cork City in the Europen Cup tomorrow, Noel Spillane reports:

PAGE 20.

■ *Turkish players arriving in Cork.*

The Cork Examiner

NANNY KNOWS BEST

You've seen her on TV — now read her in the Eye

"Handing over your country to a stranger may seem like a risk, but discipline and order are the only answers" says Nanny.

Question:
What is the best way to deal with a difficult country?

Nanny says:
You must be firm from the start. People like a fixed routine so they know where they stand. Unfortunately some people are far too soft, like Mr Major. No wonder he cannot control his country.

Question:
Should one's country be allowed to mix with other ones in Europe?

Nanny says:
Foreigners are all very well in their place, but one should not let one's country get too close. Some of them have very dirty habits. Treat them firmly and they will respect you for it. Some people ignore this advice and, like Mr Major, get into a terrible mess.

Question:
Should you spoonfeed your country?

Nanny says:
Absolutely not. People must stand on their own two feet. If you keep giving them handouts they will never become independent. It's all too easy to try and win popularity by giving your country benefits but they won't respect you any more than they do Mr Major.

Question:
If a nanny has retired, should she be allowed to come back and look after the country again?

Nanny says:
Yes, of course. Old nannies are the best, and people respect them. Unlike Mr Major.

DANNY BAKER interviews MICHAEL ASPEL

The new face of TV chat meets the old face of it

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

Danny Baker: Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha. So Michael, you recently quit the business saying chat show hosts have to be sycophantic to their guests. I mean that's a brilliant point. Nice suit by the way. Have you got a book out? Never mind. Come back when you have. You're welcome on my show anytime.
(Audience applauds)

Aspel: Good evening.

Baker: Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha. That's fantastic. You also said that the problem with chat shows is that it's an outdated formula that becomes very boring.

Aspel: Z-z-z-z-z-z.
(Credits roll)

The Danny Baker show was based on the Clive Anderson show which was adapted for television from the Jonathan Ross show which was developed from a show by David Letterman.

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (17)

A MICROPHONE STAND

PRIVATE EYE

As from next week, Private Eye is to relaunch.

The new-look Eye will come to you in 13 easy-to-read sections, each with a distinctive flavour.

Eyeopeners — an easy-to-read summary of everything that's in the other sections.

Eye Life — the leisure section, devoted to cookery, surfboarding and foreign news.

Eyecatcher — fishing and fashion. The exciting worlds of angling and the catwalk, with a new column by Naomi Campbell.

The Third Eye — supplement for alternative lifestyle lovers. Up-to-the-minute articles on aromatherapy, reflexology and trends in the property market.

Eye Europe — the movers and shakers of the new post-Maastricht Europe, from Brussels to Oslo. This week: a Guide to Gay Limoges, plus DIY hints for the Over-50s.

Eye Self — in-depth interviews. Will Self talks to Martin Amis. Martin Amis talks to Will Self. Plus: new short story by Will Self.

Eye Sport — all the latest sport, plus Personal Finance, Gallery Choice and CD Guide.

Eye Media — top names in the media world talk about each other. This week: Will Self interviews Lynn Barber. Plus gardening, chess, brainteaser and editorials on Party Conferences.

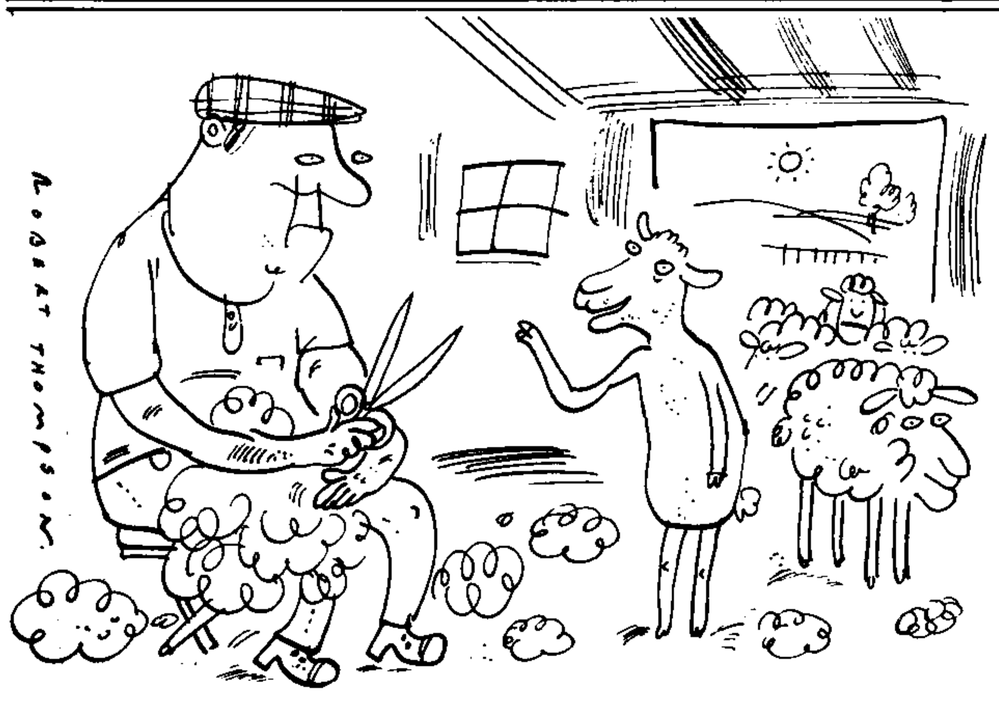
Eye Columns — 300 columns by all your favourite columnists poached from other newspapers, including Melanie Burchill, Alan Amiel, Alastair Watneys, Peregrine Littlejohn, Simon Junor. Plus motoring, star signs and TV films.

Eye Culture — Is Post-Modernism Post-Modern? by Jocelyn Targett, Toby Young and Tom Shone. The Booker Hopefuls — 6-page colour pull-out, with exclusive interview with Will Self.

Eye News — this section has been abandoned on the advice of the marketing men.

Eye Listings — your guide to next week's TV. This can be delivered separately, as it is the only bit you'll want to read.

McEye — special Scottish section. ***(That's enough sections. Ed.)***



"Oh, and a packet of Durex, please"

WORLD OF SOCCER

KNEE IN TICKET ROW

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked to its foundations by the accusation that Neasden's FC's legendary manager, Ron Knee, 59, had sold two tickets for a home game against Dollis Hill in 1983.

The sensational claims, made in the *Neasden Free Messenger and Property News*, allege that Knee took his allocated seats for the Bachelors Savoury Rice North London Relegation League Derby and sold them unofficially to Neasden fans (Sid and Doris Bonkers).

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man On The Terraces With The Neasden Fried Chicken Special (Includes Nuggets, Diet Shake, Onions 'n' Fries) And A Paperback Copy Of "Fever Pitch"

Clough Trade

Yesterday Ron Knee was typically tight-lipped. Speaking from the Detoxification Wing of the George V Memorial Hospital he said: "I am a great manager. My record speaks for itself. I am about to be sick as a parrot. Excuse me."

But the evidence is beginning to look serious for Knee. The Bonkers themselves admit they were at the game in question and also bought the tickets in the Boston Arms from "a stranger".

"We paid £2 each for them. Normally we climb over the wall. It was a rip-off and Ron Knee knows it."

LATE SCORE

IKEA Cup — 1st Leg

Racing Club Algarve (Doppelganger 1, Schwarzkopf 3, Pevsner 2 [o.g.])	6
Neasden	0

Advertisement

We Take Good Care Of Some Of You

***Fly BA** (British Ayatollah)*
The World's Most Cowardly Airline

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Publication Of *I Love Lucy*, The Memoirs Of Sir Perishing Worthless, the well-known *Sunday Telegraph* Columnist

So. Peregrine Worsthorne,
You once said 'fuck' on
the telly.
And when you were young
You were seduced by
George Melly.
Er... that's it.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

This year's winner of the Auberon Waugh Poetry That Rhymes Award, sponsored by the Mail On Sunday and Festertrash Publications plc.

EXCITING NEW FEATURE AS SEEN IN ALL NEWSPAPERS

WHY I ♥ MY

PRIVATE EYE

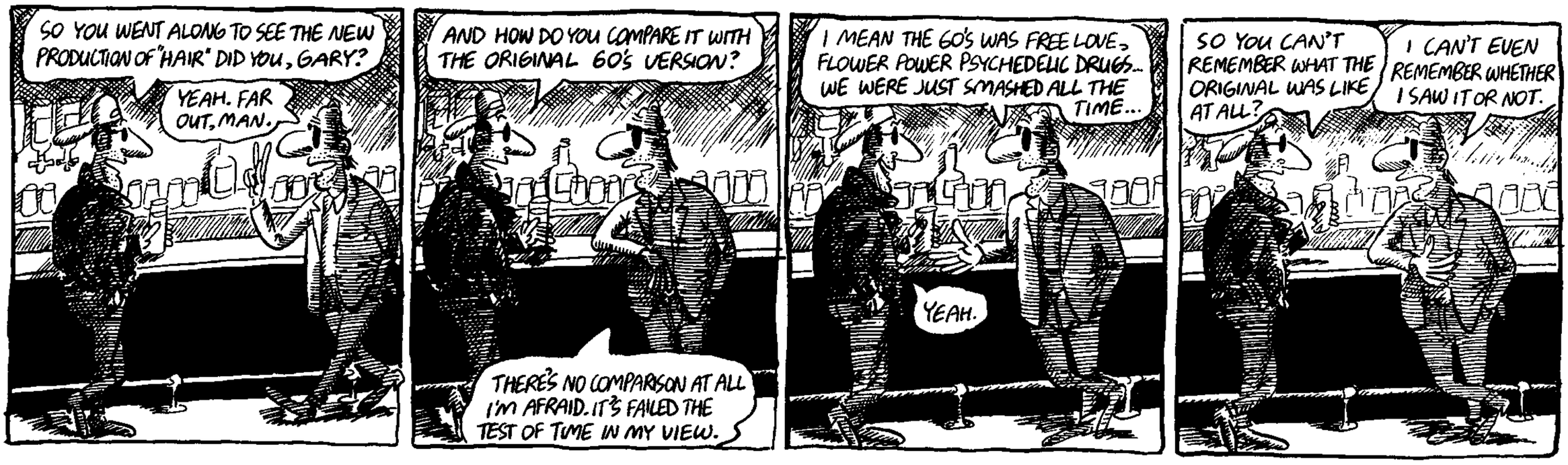
This week's £25 winning letter

'I LOVE *Eye* and buy it every week. Its racing tips are "tip top" and my wife says the horoscopes are spot on.'

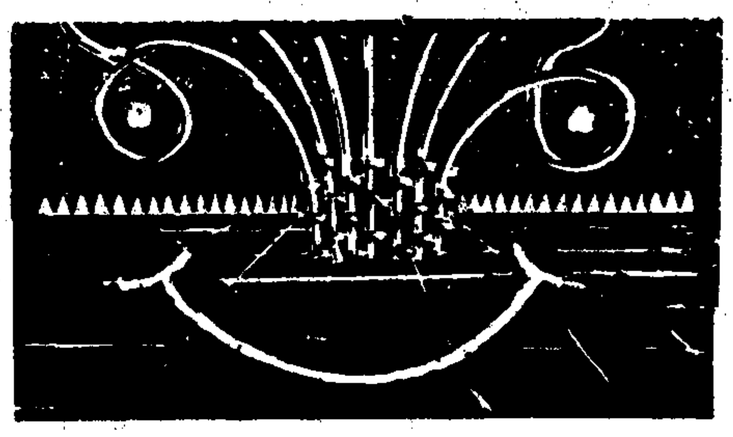
V. Bogus (Mr)
Carlisle Street, Soho

Great Bores Of Today.

"... I think it's brilliant so far it's obviously not Kinnock though at the same time it is that's why it's so clever you can see why the Labour Party's so worried it really shows them up and apparently the bloke who wrote it was allowed to follow Kinnock around during the election not that it *is* Kinnock it could be any of them because this leader in the play what's his name? hang on it's in the programme John Thaw no that's not it anyway this leader isn't Welsh so it can't be Kinnock anyway you've got to see all three plays together to really understand what the author's trying to say have you seen the one about the vicars? I haven't myself but according to the programme it's a brilliant attack on the Church of England anyway John Thaw's very good indeed isn't he? you don't think of him as Kinnock at all because he's not Kinnock obviously oh look over there by the coffee and cake isn't that Roy Hattersley? he must be furious the way he's been portrayed no maybe it isn't him this really is a searing indictment of everything today shall we skip the second half? there's a repeat of that Morse with the tycoon who isn't Maxwell but he is if you know what I mean..."


SO YOU WENT ALONG TO SEE THE NEW PRODUCTION OF "HAIR" DID YOU, GARY?
YEAH. FAR OUT, MAN.
AND HOW DO YOU COMPARE IT WITH THE ORIGINAL 60's VERSION?
THERE'S NO COMPARISON AT ALL I'M AFRAID. IT'S FAILED THE TEST OF TIME IN MY VIEW.
I MEAN THE 60's WAS FREE LOVE, FLOWER POWER PSYCHEDELIC DRUGS... WE WERE JUST SMASHED ALL THE TIME...
YEAH.
SO YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT THE ORIGINAL WAS LIKE AT ALL?
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHETHER I SAW IT OR NOT.

DIARY



ROBERT NEWMAN
& DAVID BADDIEL

Rob: Like, Christ, yeah, right. Who wants to read this anyway?!! Talk about crap. Okay. Here we go then. Right. The comedy starts here!

Stonehenge. What a crap building. Hasn't even got a ceiling. If it was like your place you couldn't take a girl back there and shag her arse off because you'd get covered in rain. That's if it was raining, of course. Not to mention like the tourists. I mean, for fuck's sake, who wants to shag the arse off a girl in front of loads of like total prats?!!

Dave: Classic monologue, really classic, Dave. Like, when people say that our comedy is puerile, that it's just a load of wank, I want to point them in the general direction of our literally amazing classic comic monologues like the one Dave's just done on Stonehenge. We don't just DO comedy, no, we USE comedy to challenge our audience's basic preconceptions about really dark, deep subjects like the human attitude to history, and to sex, and to notions of privacy. Like Rob's really obsessed with genuine misery and loneliness, and our comedy reflects these concerns and by like doing so it makes all our viewers feel, well, really kind of lonely and miserable.

Personally, I'm obsessed by death and old age and I really believe that if you can be funny about things like death and old age like you're actually helping people to feel better about them. Here's an example, one of our all-time classics: "Christ, my old grandad died at 95 last week. Served him right for trying to shag the arse off his zimmer frame — like I always knew he was a short-sighted piss-artist, but I thought that was going a bit far!!!"

See what I mean? Holding on to your sense of childishness — or childlikeness, more like — is what great comedy's all about. Through that joke, me and Rob say far more about old age, and the tragedy of death, and the futility of human aspiration, and the basically non-stop quality of decay than say someone like T.S. Eliot ever managed in any of his paintings.

Rob: Right. Our material relaxes that desperately personal grip people have on life's problems and lets them know they're not alone in their misery. Like, another reason Stonehenge is such a crap building —

Dave: Note the running joke!!!

Rob: — Is that it's got well tons of holes in its walls — like, you couldn't hang your poster of Nirvana or The Sundays any-bloody-where because it would keep falling down, like, because even what walls there are are all like crumbley — in fact, it's piss-awful!!!

Dave: Classic! I'll tell you what really bugs me, right, is like all these tossers who say we're like just using old material and performing it really crappily and mixing it with words like spunk and wank and poofters and that somehow by doing this we're gaining street cred with teenagers who don't know any better because they're inarticulate and full of wanky shit like us. Well what total crap but total and utter wank. We're nothing like other comedians because other comedians just make people laugh — ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho, etcetera — but we don't just make people laugh, in fact we don't make them laugh at all, we're the most serious comedians who've ever like existed, and, like if we raised a smile we'd regard it as well, pretty crappy really — like a girl you've just been shagging the arse off going really spare on you, and comparing your penis to a gherkin when you always thought it was more of a marrow!

Rob: Right! In my opinion, comedy is all like about you know thingy.

Dave: Timing.

Rob: Right, yeah — and the other thing too, you know, whatsitcalled?

Dave: Delivery?

Rob: Yeah, and that's what I was going to say, like other comedians have crap delivery and crap thingy. But not us. And talking of crap what a crap place Stonehenge turned out to be — I mean, it might be historic and built by some Roman bloke and all that but where's the CD cabinet, then?!!! I really feel like playing some Guns n' Roses, but I couldn't do that, not at Stonewankyhenge.

Dave: And don't talk to me about Almighty God — what a toss-artist he turned out to be!! And Mohammed? What sort of name is Mohammed? Buddha, too: I wish I had as many willies as he had arms — and so do my attractive girlfriends!!

Rob: Seriously, though: with jokes like that we're encouraging people to take a long hard look at themselves and their religion, and to find their own particular truth towards the ultimate truth, if any.

Dave: Did you say "the ultimate poof"?!!! Well, I'll put on another pair of trousers, then — because I like shagging the arse off birds, not blokes!!

Rob: A friend of mine came by you know like the other night and I let her in you know and she said, the thing is, I haven't brought a punchline. So I said, well, you know, don't bother, like, 'cos neither have I but they'll probably go mental about it anyway and laugh their arses off because like they're usually too thick to notice one way or the other.

Dave: Classic. Our humour's intensely *internal*, not like everybody else's. Like, I make jokes like, "God, I'm so miserable and rejected that I feel like one of those bits that looks like snot that gets put on a saucer in the fridge by some girl you've had around the house shagging your arse off" and it's like, the comedy of recognition, because everyone who's been in that position recognises it and they don't feel so intensely isolated any more.

Hey, Rob, see that pile of doggy-poo over there?

Rob: Yeah, Dave.

Dave: That's our act, that is.

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (18)

DEVICE FOR DETECTING EARTH TREMORS

YOUNG MASSEUR couples free massage **VISITING** offers ladies introductory all areas 0850

Gt. Yarmouth & Gorleston Advertiser

She said: "I am not aware of any big surge in vandalism lately and would suggest that this sort of thing is left to the police.

S.Devon Herald Express

"The weapon carriers have been tested against prolonged fire and we are confident that an accident would prevent no threat or risk to the public," he said.

Northern Echo

STEVE Norris, Minister for Transport in London, promising that London Transport's popular Travelcard will be retained after London's buses are sold off to private operators, said: "This is not a trick, I have no cards up my sleeve. I do speak with forked tongue"

Taxiglobe

Literary Review

Skewered by time's arrow

Visiting Mrs Nabokov, and other excursions
Martin Amis
(Cape, £15.99)

FLICKING through the newspaper lists of famous people's birthdays to discover that *Martin* Amis is 44, as one was able to do a month or so ago, was a sobering experience — like registering the first crease on the loved one's previously flawless cheekline, or the incipiently pensionable status of Brigitte Bardot.

They're so *old*, these icons we grew up with, whose images we tacked on to our student bedsit walls, whose books we introduced gravely to our collection of dog-eared paperbacks, and it won't be long now, not that long, before time's dustcart comes to ferry them away.

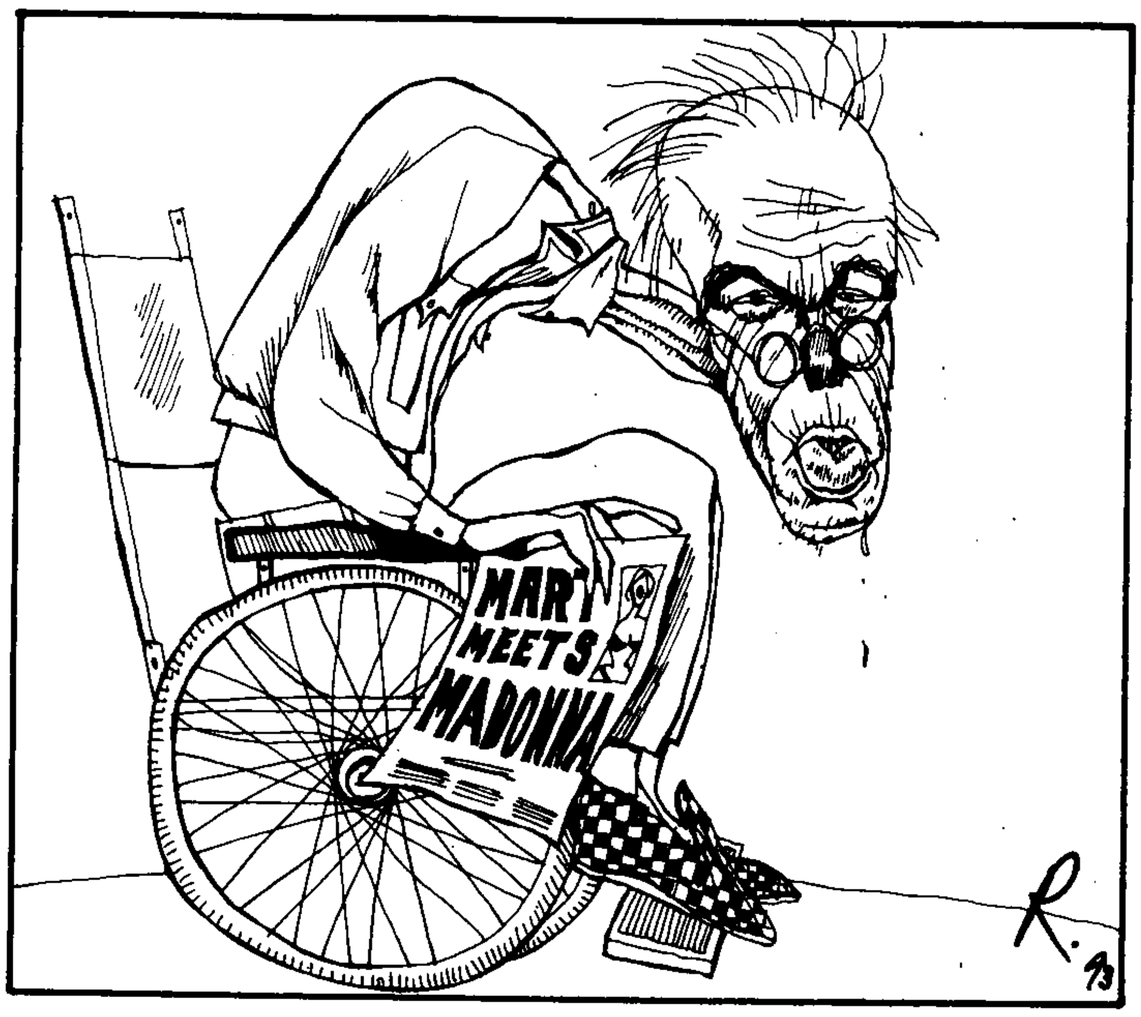
Being a middle-aged literary hipster — the role Martin Amis seems to have acquired, without particularly wanting to, one imagines — must be a difficult business. On the testimony of *Visiting Mrs Nabokov*, even being a young literary hipster was something he had trouble with. The music was too loud (the Stones at Earls Court in 1976), the booze too plentiful (a famously drunken interview with Anthony Burgess), the late nights too wearying (the Cannes film festival back in 77).

Worse was the posturing that editors clearly expected from their biro-toting protégés at this time — the sneers, the put-downs, all the effortful say-nays of the literary contender's repertoire. Because what young Mart — I think I can call him Mart after all these years — really wanted was to be nice to people. In fact, beneath the cockiness and the serious frown, Mart was really just a regular guy after all.

The title piece, for example, an early 80s encounter with Vladimir Nabokov's widow and son in their Swiss hotel fastness, is quite wonderfully obsequious, references to Vera's "deeply responsive face", which is "still suffused with feminine light", Dimitri "a figure of considerable interest himself", "the accomplished translator of many of this father's novels" and so on.

This is Mart's second scrapbook of old journalism — the first, *The Moronic Inferno, and other visits to America* came out in 86. Quality-wise, it falls some way behind the dizzying accomplishment of its predecessor. Not only does it lack the first book's coherence, the unity of theme and purpose, but there aren't so many literary pieces, and the journalist Amis is at his best simply as a literary critic rather than a souped-up cultural commentator or political bar-fly.

So while we get a hot-shit interview with Updike and a respectful obituary of Larkin, they rub shoulders with some of Mart's wackier peregrinations outside the agreeable rumpus-room of his study. I mean, do we want to know what he thought about a rock concert 17 years ago, or the experience of playing snooker with Julian Barnes (the Barnes snooker piece, by the way, is a perfect example of the shoulder-patting mateyness of literary London that people rightly complain about, as is the poker game with Al Alvarez and co)?



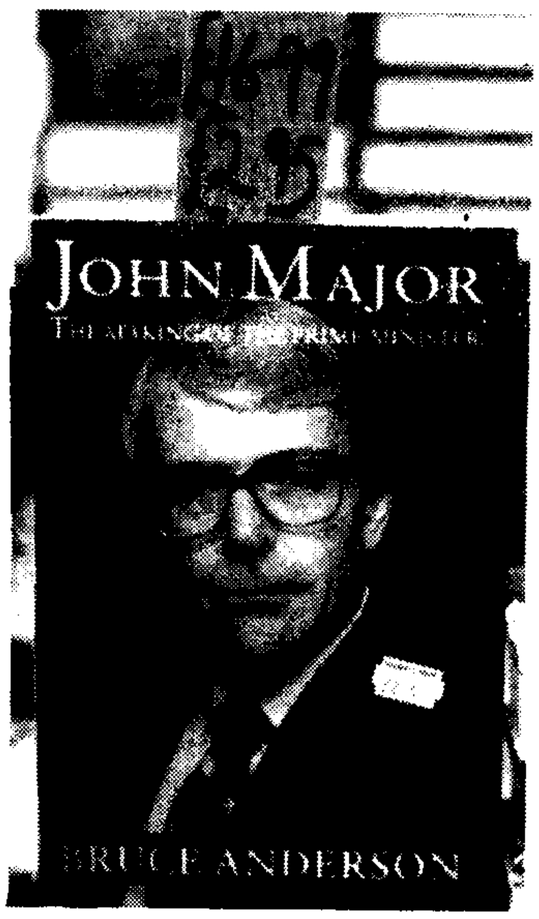
Unsurprisingly, Mart's much better when he's writing about darts or football, subjects which allow him to do what he does best. Oddly, what Mart is *really good at* is patronising the working classes. Those darts players, those fat bastards with their fisted lagers and piggy eyes! Just watch Mart take them on, that's all!

Actually one can extend this net to say that what Mart's really good at is patronising unintelligent or venal people who don't know they're unintelligent or venal (the distinction is an unimportant one). Setting him down at the 1988 Republican Convention wasn't fair, neither to Bush and Quayle nor to Mart himself, because the tone gets a bit shrill and you just *know* that nobody here is really up to the smart boy's fighting weight.

In the end, though, it's Mart's slow, steady progress towards his half-century that you begin to worry about. There's a mock-terrible moment when he realises that the interview with Nicholson Baker is the first he's conducted with a younger man. The style of the later pieces, too, is stuck halfway between youthful excess and uneasy maturity, and the result is the laboured formulations of a beetle-browed non-interview with Madonna ("From the start Madonna has included pornography in her array of cultural weaponry — because she understands its modern, industrial nature").

All this has got to stop, Mart. I mean essays on *Madonna*, every serious observation on whom could be fitted into a short paragraph, that rickety style which sacrifices everything — and I mean *everything*, plausibility, accuracy, clarity — in its eagerness to please? You've got to make your mind up where to go from here, Mart. This is the '90s, darlings, and Keith Talent is dead.

JUST FANCY THAT



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ THREE of the six shortlisted novels for the 25th Booker Prize probably deserve to be there.

Lord Gowrie and fellow judges probably chose David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon* **because the author should have won with his last book. Carol Shields'** *The Stone Diaries* **might win but more likely will be runner-up, the judges having been instructed not to come up this year with joint winners. Roddy Doyle's** *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* **is the bookies' favourite, no doubt because they've seen the film of** *The Commitments*.

Each of the other authors must be astonished to be on the list, particularly Michael Ignatieff. Iggy's autobiographical *Scar Tissue* **is the one book no one expects to win, except possibly the judges. Caryl ("He's a man, you know", Lord Gowrie helpfully pointed out when announcing the shortlist) Phillips'** *Crossing the River* **isn't a patch on his last novel,** *Cambridge*. **Which leaves** *Under the Frog* **by Tibor Fischer, the only author of the six, although of Hungarian parentage, to be born in this country. Twelve agents and 50 publishers turned down the book before Polygon in Edinburgh scooped it up.** *The Stone Diaries* **is published by fashionable Fourth Estate. Bloomsbury has one title, Secker one, and Chatto two. Faber, Hamish Hamilton and Viking and all the other literary houses will not this year have dinner at Booker's expense on 26 October.**

■ A VULGAR newspaper advertisement for American Express featuring a drawing of Terry Maher, chairman and chief executive of Pentos, which owns Athena, Rymans and Dillons bookshops, has appeared with immaculate timing.

In it Maher confides: "I try and [*sic*] fit in a short story at lunchtime", before confessing that he's been an American Express cardmember since 1979.

Maher should be able to fit more than a short story in at lunchtime soon, as the day the ad appeared in the *Evening Standard* other papers announced that, following disastrous figures for Pentos, the chairman and chief executive would be departing before the end of the year.

'Bookworm'

footnotes

THREE MEN AND A BOAT

THREE SIRS: John Cuckney, Philip Harris and Patrick Sheehy

NEWSPAPERS made a great deal out of the decision to charge two men with the manslaughter of four teenagers who were drowned in March when their canoes capsized at sea.

The two men are Joe Stoddart, manager of the St Albans Outdoor Centre, Lyme Regis, Dorset; and Peter Kite, managing director of parent company Active Learning and Leisure.

More charges are to come, apparently. As the *Daily Mail* reported on 22 September: "Police said steps were being taken to ensure the company appeared in court the same day charged with corporate manslaughter."

Corporate manslaughter! Surely that charge died forever with the prosecution of P&O over the deaths of nearly 200 people in a capsized ferry at Zeebrugge in 1987. Mr Justice Turner stopped that case and took it away from the jury before the company's defence was even heard.

How could the police now even contemplate bringing such a terrible charge against a company? Don't they know that the main shareholders of Active Learning and Leisure at the time of the accident were terribly important?

One was the carpet king and Thatcherite wonderboy Sir Philip Harris. Another was venture capitalists 3i, whose former chairman was another captain of all sorts of industries, Sir John Cuckney. The third shareholder was BAT Industries: chairman Sir Patrick Sheehy.

He's the same Sheehy who wrote the recent not very popular report on the police. So perhaps the police do know what they're doing after all. . .

I resign. .er. . I'll read that again

■ NOT EVERYONE at the University College of Swansea wants to patch up the quarrel between the three philosophy lecturers who exposed the college's "degrees for sale" scandal (see last Footnotes).

A report by arbitrators went to the college council last week recommending that the three be reinstated. The council was also confronted with a letter from the head of the philosophy department, Mr Dick Beardsmore, who made it clear that if the council accepted the arbitrator's report and reinstated the three, he would resign.

The council reacted swiftly. By 33 to nil, it voted for reinstatement. Mr Beardsmore is said to be "reconsidering" his resignation.

Canary Gaffe

GLEN WRIGHT was talking to a friend in a busy street when he was arrested because he looked like someone who might have stolen a wallet from a nearby office. He was, after all, black.

Glen was delighted when the police told him the date the wallet had been stolen in Farnborough, Hants. On that day he'd been on holiday in the Canaries, 2,000 miles away.

He offered to take the officers round the corner to Cooks, the travel agent where his holiday had been booked. By way of a reply, however, he was carted off to the police station, banged up in a cell and interviewed for two hours when it was suggested that he'd got his holiday dates wrong.

Glen Wright

Mr Wright hadn't got them wrong. He was released on police bail. Two weeks later he got a letter saying there wasn't enough evidence to prosecute him, but he was warned that he might yet be prosecuted if new evidence emerged in future.

Hampshire police, specifically Inspector Chris Wilbon, have refused to explain or apologise.

Chamber pot of gold

IS EVERYTHING all right at the London Chamber of Commerce and its Commercial Education Trust, set up as a charity to run the chamber's worldwide business examinations?

For some time senior staff at the chamber and the trust have been worried about payments from the charity to the chamber which, in the words of one former trust executive "would not stand up to independent investigation".

I asked the Chamber of Commerce nine questions about this. The answers took a bit of time (and a lot of legal advice), but here are the main ones.

Q: By my calculations, the audited accounts of both trust and chamber show total charges from the chamber to the trust for "bursaries administered by the chamber" between 1983 and 1991 as £316,000. Do you accept this figure?

A: £245,000 was paid to the chamber between 1988 and 1991 under a bursary scheme administered for the trustees by the chamber.

Q: Were these bursaries administered in-house by the chamber's training division?

No reply.

Q: If so, did the payments for them constitute a conflict of interest between the chamber and the charity?

No reply.

Q: How many bursaries and for how many individuals were provided by this money?

A: Several hundred. . .

Q: How many of these trainees came from companies which subscribe to the chamber?

A: We have no way of knowing.

Q: The accounts show "management charges" paid by the trust to the chamber. The total of these charges in six years is £634,375. Do you accept this figure?

A: Your figure is correct, although you may not realise it includes VAT.

Q: For what services was this paid?

A: Management and administrative services provided by the chamber to the trustees. They are all approved by the trustees and examined by the trust's auditors.

Q: Is there anything in the allegation that the services for which the charges were made were illusory, and were often no more than consultations between chamber and trust executives?

No reply.

Q: After allowing for interest on both these sets of charges, I calculate the total cost to the trust at around £1.3m or nearly double the chamber's net current liabilities in the 1990 accounts. Do you accept this figure and if not what is the correct one?

No reply.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"I think the truth is that there are no complaints about newspapers".

Patsy Chapman, Editor News of the World, quoted in Financial Times Sept 30.

BUTLER DID IT!

■ MOST observers at Lord Justice Scott's Iraqgate inquiry believe that the well-spoken chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, William Waldegrave, has cooked his goose. But it would be wrong to underestimate Waldegrave's cunning. He has resolved to sink or swim with someone a million times more important then he is: Sir Robin Butler, head of the cabinet office.

Waldegrave's case at the inquiry, where he appeared as the former foreign office minister responsible for the Middle East, was that the guidelines banning arms sales to Iraq and set out in 1985 by Sir Geoffrey Howe as foreign secretary had never changed.

Whoops! Only 20 months ago, the foreign office said exactly the opposite to a House of Commons select committee.

On 28 January last year a hugely-influential Gang of Four from the FO gave evidence to the select committee on the supergun affair. They were: Mr John Goulden CMG, under secretary in charge of defence and arms control; Patrick Nixon, CMG OBE, head of the FO Middle East department; Roland Smith and Tim Dowse, from the "non-proliferation" (of nuclear weapons) department.

In answer to a question from MP Menzies Campbell, Mr Goulden was quite specific: "The guidelines set out by Sir Geoffrey Howe applied until December 1988 when the third guideline was amended."

This statement was made from a briefing agreed by all relevant government departments, including the cabinet office.

The cabinet office had been extremely active on the arms for Iraq question ever since April 1990 when barrels for the biggest gun in the whole history of the world were found for export to Iraq at Teesport docks. Immediately, Sir Robin Butler set up a special "Iraqi Gun Group" to find out how the arms embargo guidelines had been so stupendously breached.

The involvement of the cabinet office was confirmed by Alan Clark, then minister for defence procurement, in a highly confidential letter to trade minister Lord Trefgarne dated 3 May 1990. Officially, though, the Butler inquiry was kept secret, and those who took part were ordered not to say a word about it.

Imagine the embarassment, therefore, of John Goulden at the 1992 select committee hearing, when he was asked by chairman Kenneth Warren if he had "participated in any investigation into the supergun affair since April 1990". Mr Goulden was very embarrassed. Glancing nervously at his colleagues, he replied: "I think I would need notice of that, chairman. I do not know the answer definitively."

Mr Warren was not satisfied: "Have you participated," he insisted, "in the Butler report for the cabinet office in this matter?"

Mr Goulden's embarrassment increased. "I think I would need notice of that too," he mumbled.

Later, Mr Goulden submitted a note to the committee, as follows: "There was never any 'inquiry' by

Sir Robin Butler

Sir Robin Butler. Since the time the supergun story first attracted parliamentary and media interest, the foreign and commonwealth office has discussed this matter with other government departments and has as necessary exchanged information with them."

Almost immediately after submitting this gobbledegook, Mr Goulden was promoted to become Her Majesty's ambassador in Turkey.

In January 1992, therefore, the government position was as follows. The arms for Iraq guidelines had been changed, and there had been no inquiry into the matter by Sir Robin Butler.

Ten months later the shit hit the fan with the Matrix Churchill case and the Scott inquiry. Ministers had to answer two awkward questions:

a). Who changed the guidelines?

b). Why hadn't parliament or the public been told about the change?

This was specially acute for Mr Waldegrave the minister for open government. How could he admit in public that his government had changed arms embargo guidelines without telling anyone?

He solved the problem by rewriting history. The guidelines, he decided, had not been changed at all. How could he prove it? By reference to the inquiry by Sir Robin Butler which had (according to the top civil servants) never taken place.

Again and again in his evidence Waldegrave referred to "the Iraq note". This was, he explained, "a cabinet office review into arms and other exports to Iraq". He told the Scott team this was a "thorough operation done with considerable care". Happily for him the "Iraq note" made no reference to any change in the guidelines.

The story so far, therefore, is as follows: In January 1992, top FO officials tell the Commons that a) the guidelines were changed; b) there was no Butler inquiry. In September 1993, Mr Waldegrave tells Scott that a) the guidelines were not changed; b) the proof is the Butler inquiry.

If Waldegrave goes, can Butler be far behind?

NO TELL, NO TEL

MUCH WAS made by *Panorama* in its programme about Tottenham Hotspur football club of the fact that Terry Venables, the former chief executive, had "refused to honour the BBC's normal rules of interview, and had therefore not appeared on the programme."

But is it breaking the rules of interview to ask about chequebook journalism?

The following is the text of Venables's fax to Panorama on 12 September:

"Thank you for your letter asking me to appear on *Panorama*. However, before I agree to answer your questions I need written assurances signed by the programme producer and the programme editor that you have NOT:

1) Paid or agreed to pay any person any money for copies or access to copies of the private and confidential ledgers of my company Edennote PLC.

2) Paid or agreed to pay directly or indirectly any money to accountant Richard Theobald for information about me.

3) Paid or agreed to pay my former business partner Paul Riviere any money or expenses for assisting you in your enquiries.

4) Paid any person more than the normal rate of interview.

If you are able to give me this written assurance I am of course quite happy to answer any of the questions you have put to me. However, if you are not able to give me this written assurance, I am unable to go on the programme."

The reply came on 13 September from Mark Killick, senior producer of *Panorama*. "I cannot discuss the details of any arrangements between the BBC and any programme contributor or consultant and am therefore unable to give the undertakings you seek."

Venables did not appear. His belief that Theobald -- a former employee sacked from the Spurs office at Princes Gate -- may have been paid was reinforced by a tape recording of a conversation last August in which Theobald says: "*Panorama* offered me money, but the money comes with strings".

PS: Herbert Smith, widely regarded as the most expensive solicitors in the world, have taken a box at Tottenham and have paid £20,000 for it.

Herbert Smith, solicitors to Amstrad, chairman Alan Sugar, are now solicitors to Tottenham Hotspur, chairman Alan Sugar.

Gwen penned

■ SOME readers have asked what happened to Gwen Tucker, 44, the Essex mother of three whose case was reported here last month.

She was sent to prison for six months for claiming social security benefits without disclosing her new £67 a week job. She pleaded that her husband had left her and she could not pay the mortgage or support her children on benefit.

The sentence shocked even the local Tory MP, and the case was hurried on to the court of appeal where it was heard by Mr Justice Judge (best known for his prosecution of the Bridgewater three – still in prison, though innocent, after 15 years); Mr Justice Turner (best known for his conduct of the M50 murder case, for which Edward Browning is still in prison, though innocent, after five years); and Lord Justice Rose.

All three judges thought the prison sentence absolutely marvellous, and upheld it. The big crowd in court did not seem to agree. There were some unruly scenes. At one stage the scandalous phrase "sadistic old goats!" could be heard rising above the hubbub.

Gwen is now in Holloway prison where the cost of keeping her is equivalent to ten times her income support.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG,or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

In the City
See over ➔

In the City

TRADE secretary Michael Heseltine's enjoyment of the party conference will not be improved by news that out there in the Tory darkness that is Britain beyond Blackpool, those with bad intentions continue to pursue unsubstantiated rumours of his links to the fugitive Asil Nadir, on whose behalf he intervened with the attorney-general.

Increasingly such inquiries focus on another bankrupt City figure still enjoying the good life in sunny climes — stockbroker Jonathan Bekhor. Bekhor, who owes a mere £37 million as a result of the collapse of that founder member of the List of Usual Suspects, A.J. Bekhor, is now to be found running a stockbroking firm in California and enjoying being far from down and out in Beverly Hills.

It is believed the usually tightlipped Bekhor could hold the key to why suspended tax investigator Michael Allcock developed an interest in Heseltine prior to his suspension over allegations of corruption.

Allcock and a colleague from Special Office 2 flew out to see Bekhor at the stockbroker's expense two years ago. The taxmen had interviewed him once before when he was still in London. Then they were mainly pursuing inquiries into Bekhor's dealing for offshore companies which hid the identities of Nadir associates trading Polly Peck shares on inside information, but also clues relating to other offshore share-dealing activities. The second trip was much more concerned with non-Nadir matters.

It is understood that during this second session, looking to cut a deal with the Revenue, his biggest creditor, Bekhor raised the name of Michael Heseltine as being not unknown to certain clients of his firm. It was not suggested that Heseltine had been a client himself — hardly surprising given Bekhor's past.

Just how Jonathan Bekhor should know of Heseltine and why he should feel it appropriate to drop his name to the tax investigators is a mystery. Especially as it can be safely assumed that any share dealings by the trade secretary on or offshore would have been perfectly legal and fully disclosed to the tax authorities.

THE SERIOUS Farce Office decision to wave the white flag over former Polly Peck company secretary John Turner had seemed inevitable since Asil Nadir fled in May. The SFO was in a bind over Turner whose role, while significant, was never more than minor as indicated by the false accounting charges he faced and on which he has now been acquitted.

To have proceeded against Turner on his own would have run slap bang into the "Nuremburg defence" — that he was only obeying orders, and from a chairman who was now sunning himself far away. That combination is one prosecutors dread because it is hard to beat. Juries are likely to be sympathetic to the little man left behind by Mr Big to take the fall.

The SFO was thus firmly between a rock and a hard place. If it proceeded against Turner and obtained a conviction the reaction would have been "so what?" If it proceeded and failed there would be another Blue Arrow/Guinness style uproar — especially as the Turner trial was expected to last three to four months, due to the anticipated long list of witnesses. (Because the case against Nadir is essentially proving the paper trail of how he syphoned away some £150 million, the list of witnesses lined up for his trial, largely just to prove documents, was said to total 600!)

But if the SFO dropped the case against Turner it would not only run the risk of attack from its critics but also encourage Nadir to claim the decision as evidence that there was also no case against him. Eventually it was decided this was the lesser evil.

However, this decision is expected to fuel the anticipated Nadir blast which he has been preparing to release during October to coincide either with the Tory party conference or the third anniversary of Polly Peck's £1 billion crash into administration.

Nadir associates have been talking yet again of major revelations concerning his dealings with the British government and the Tories — the world has been waiting on Nadir to deliver on his Watergate threat since June — and of transcripts of telephone conversation between him and senior spooks prior to Polly Peck's collapse. All proof to the Nadir sycophants and mouthpieces that an Anglo-American-Greek "plot", aided by those journalists and others whose investigations showed the Polly Peck king had no clothes, caused the company to crash rather than a massive black hole in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Nadir is also expected to attack the administrators for failing to realise the true worth of the valuable assets he built up in Northern Cyprus and Turkey. But perhaps as he had stolen most of the money which was supposedly earmarked for those investments and has continued to milk the companies still under his influence the disappointing result is no surprise.

AS THE RUNNERS and riders start to assemble this autumn for the great British lottery race, those looking for the likely winner should not ignore the horse carrying the Tory party colours – The Great British Lottery Company.

This consortium was put together by merchant bankers Hambros. Charles Hambro just happens to be joint party treasurer. Another prominent member is Carlton Communications, whose chairman Michael Green is a substantial contributor to party funds. Also backing this bid is that voice of the Tory faithful, Associated Newspapers. Doubtless such connections will prove completely irrelevant and useless when the lucrative contract to run the £2 billion a year national lottery is awarded next year.

TORY PARTY chairman Sir Norman Fowler has always been among those believers in free enterprise, endlessly chanting the Thatcherite mantra "The market must decide". So it is somewhat surprising, or maybe not, to discover a company of which he is chairman accused of being a less than true believer in competition and market forces.

Fowler is chairman of Midland Independent Newspapers, formed following the management buy-out of the Birmingham Post & Mail and Coventry Newspapers in November 1991. Since that £125 million deal, MIN has moved to increase its influence in the west, north and east Midlands by acquiring a Thomson-owned chain earlier this year. In certain Midlands towns MIN now has a profitable monopoly.

Last year as part of its expansion, MIN acquired the recently closed *Nuneaton Evening Tribune*. The Nuneaton evening market was then supplied by an extremely limited Nuneaton edition of the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*.

To meet the resulting demand for a purely Nuneaton newspaper, the *Heartland Evening News* was launched in March 1992. Despite MIN owning every other publication in the Nuneaton area — it subsequently also acquired a Nuneaton weekly free sheet, the *Herald & Post*, through the Thomson deal — this tiny rival, selling 3,000-5,000 copies a night, has been far from welcome to the free enterprisers of MIN whose *Coventry Evening Telegraph*'s total circulation exceeds 80,000.

Coventry Newspapers, the MIN subsidiary, has responded by selling its Nuneaton edition 8p cheaper than the 26p cover price in Coventry, giving away newspapers in front of vendors selling the rival paper while offering greater commissions to Nuneaton newsagents and cut-price advertising to local advertisers.

A libel action has also been started against the *Heartland Evening News*' owners Nuneaton & District Newspapers. They in turn have raised Coventry Newspapers' actions with the Office of Fair Trading, alleging predatory pricing policies. The issue could be referred to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission if the OFT believes the MIN subsidiary is trying to eliminate a rival to preserve its monopoly.

A cynic might conclude that MIN and its £25,000 a year MP chairman are only in favour of the type of competition enjoyed by monopolies – er, none. Such seemingly anti-free market actions might not be unrelated to enhancing the prospects for the imminent stock market flotation of MIN. This is designed to refinance the bank and other borrowings which made the buy-out possible and enable the backers (Candover, the Coal Board and British Rail pension funds and Barclays) and the directors to cash in.

'Slicker'

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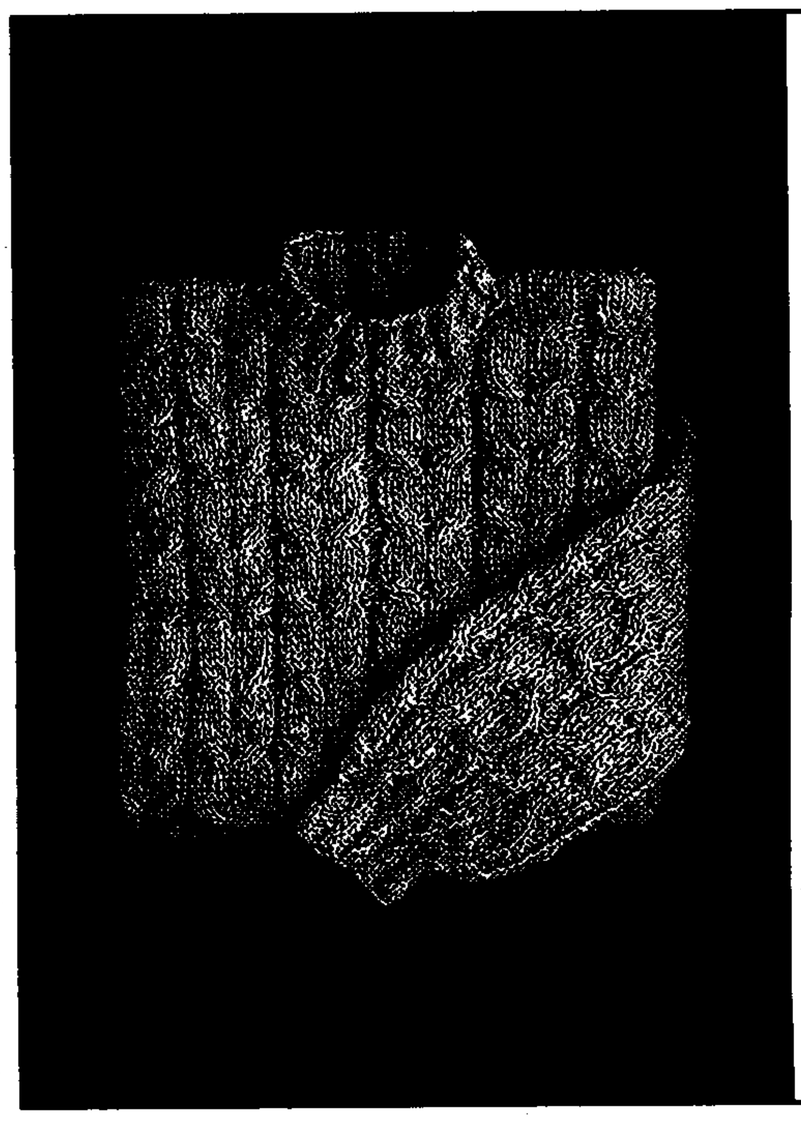

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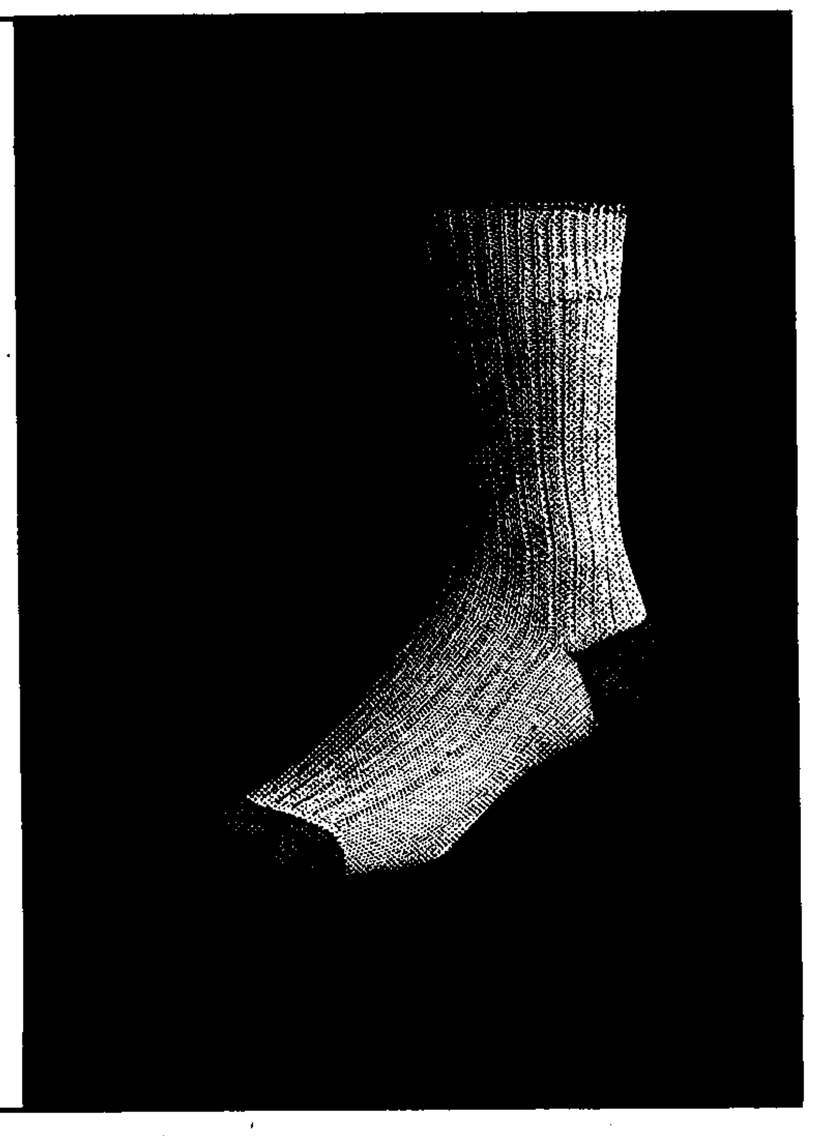

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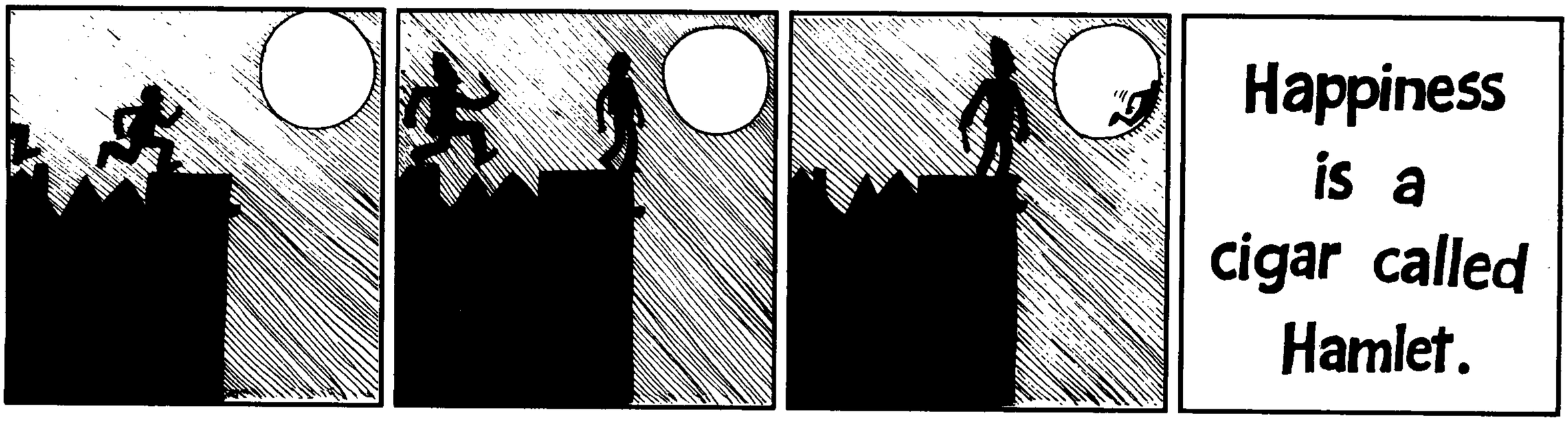

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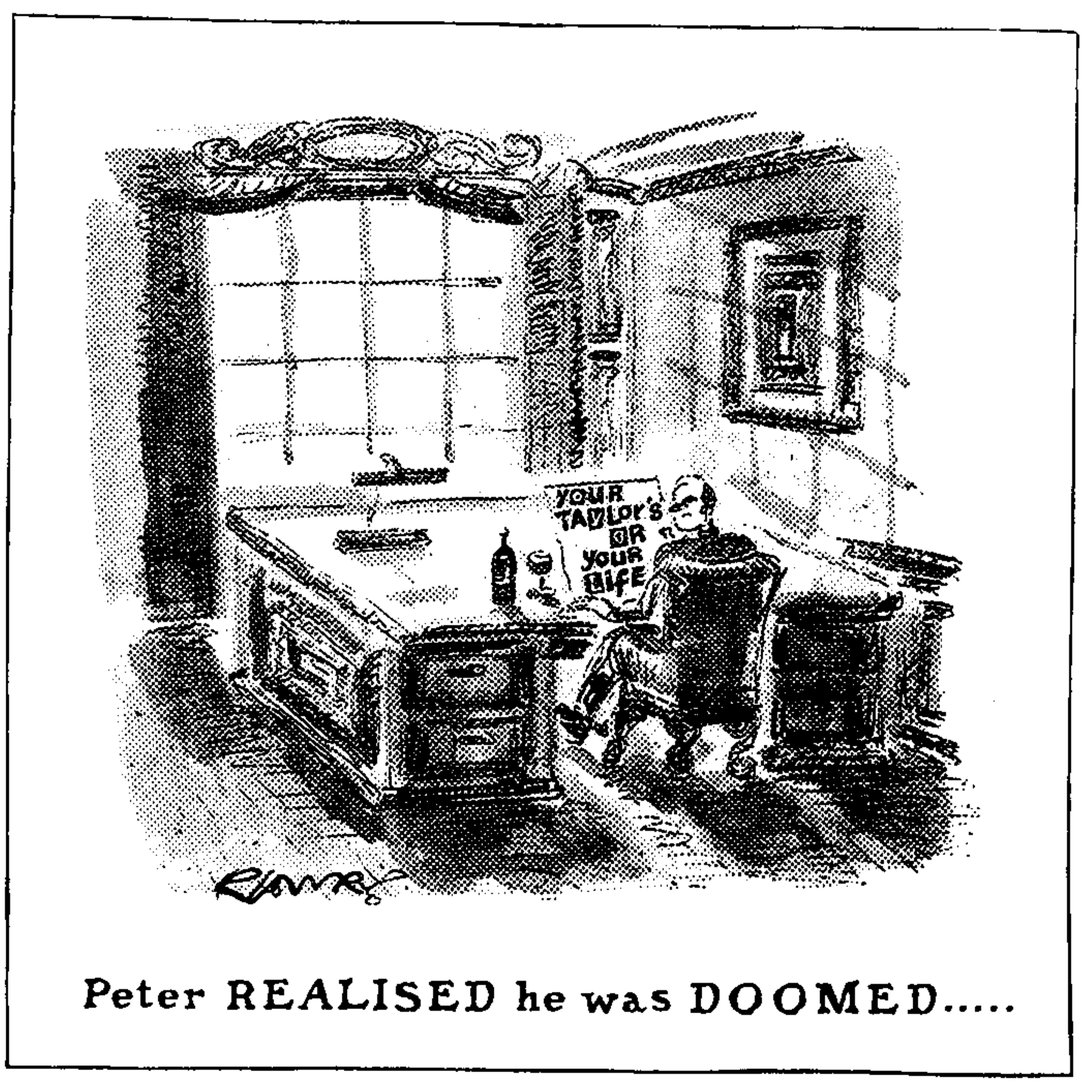

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LONDON: YET ANOTHER attractive man seeking discreet relationship for fun, friendship, intimacy, not just sex. I'm 43, sporty, witty, naughty but nice! You are... Write and tell me. Soon! Box 4830.

COSTA DEL SOL English business man, resident Marbella, attractive 6'3", 44, seeks sensual lonely lady who enjoys good food, the beach, music and fun. ALA. Photo please. Box 4930.

WEST LONDON male, 30, dry SoH, fit, in restaurant business, seeks kind female. Box 5030.

DELICIOUS SENSUAL male, 40 yrs, tall slim graduate professional, Mensa member, quietish, respectful, boring marriage tolerated (children!). Seeks sensual female for friendship, problem sharing, discreet stimulating liaison — walking holiday 94?? Box 5130.

YANG AWAITS yin. Box 5230.

LADY MATHEMATICIANS write Box 5330.

MAN, 28, SEEKS caring female socialist. Appearance not critical, but humour is! Box 5430.

ARCHITECT, WARMHEARTED, solvent, seeks compatible 40s n/s lady, view merger. Box 5530.

GENTLEMAN, TALL, considerate, educated, mid-30s, seeks sexy lady (40-55) for very discreet relationship. London. Box 5630.

WARNING: POLITICALLY incorrect ad follows. Attractive intelligent sexy 32 year old, great career, wants witty, attractive man to give cuddles and make me laugh. I love the arts, sport, eating out and cooking. You are fit, intelligent and like to have fun. Box 5730.

SLEEK-HAIRED SPORTY nurse (24) seeks sensitive man for mutual affection. Box 5830.

FINANCIALLY BEREFT, balding, single male thirtysomething, VGSoH, yearns svelte piquant female. E. Midlands. Box 5930.

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LIVELY, LISSOM lady — wine, dine, have fun with me — professional 40ish (slim, fit, 5'8") married man seeks slim sensuous new flame. Herts/Bucks. Photo please. Box 6130.

UNATTACHED MALE, writer, 40s, enjoys conversation, music, books, travel, seeks attractive female 50 share committed emotional and erotic partnership. Anywhere. Photo with letter please. Box 6230.

AMUSING, ATTRACTIVE, sensuous late thirties Bristol Sugar Daddy seeks fun loving woman to thoroughly spoil. Let's cuddle each other in front of a log fire and have some delicious fun this Autumn. Please write to me with your telephone number to Box 6330.

40'S OXON MALE with lively past but no present to speak of seeks attractive lady with a present and just enough past to be interesting. Box 6430.

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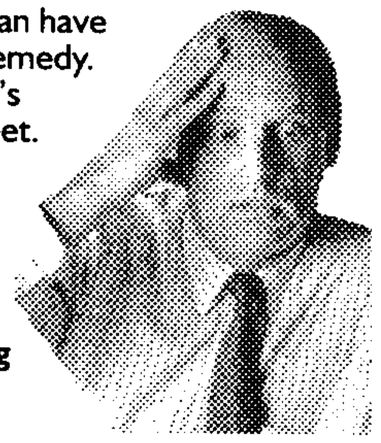

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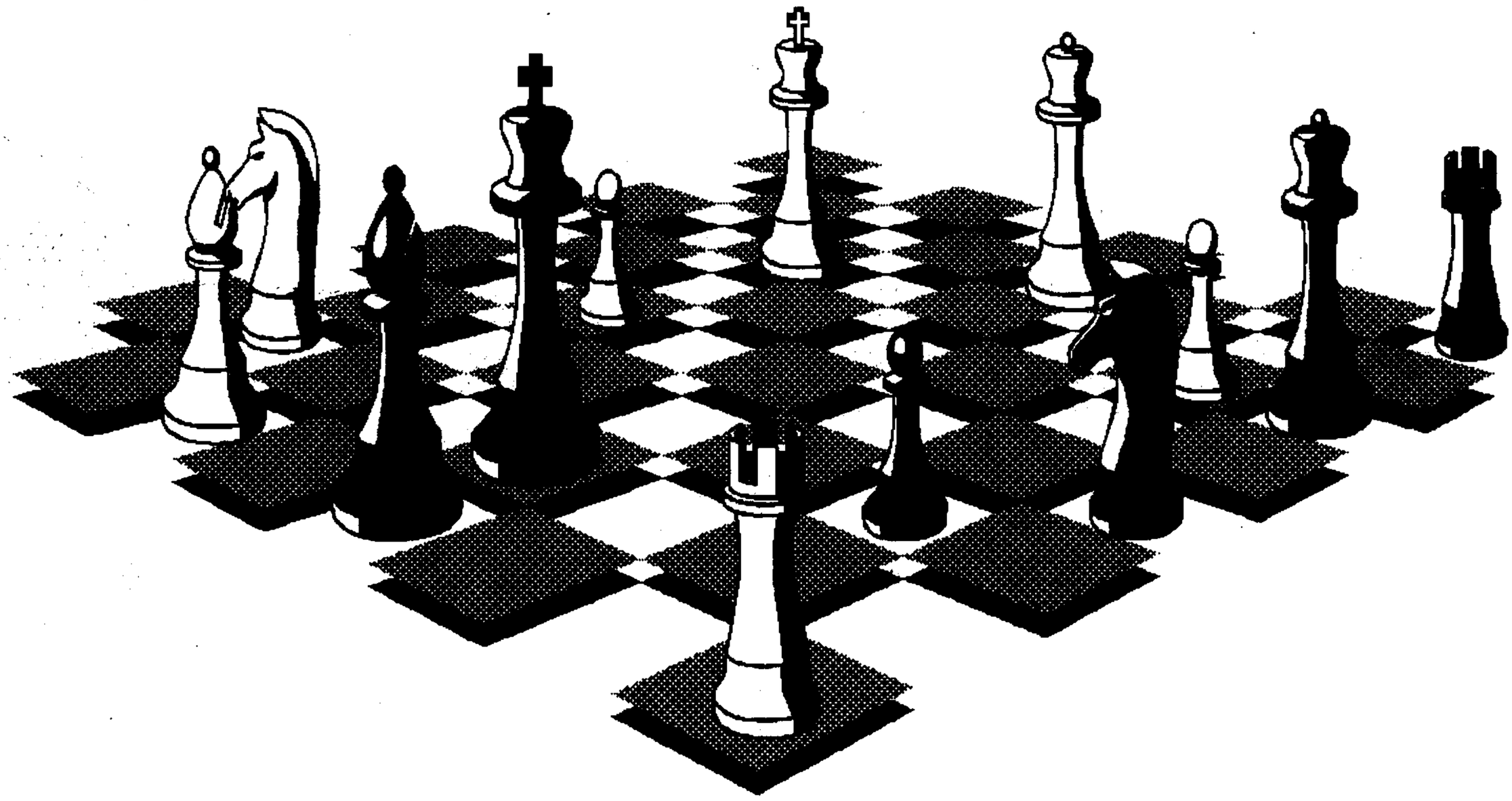

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